

KALKILYA (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinians blocked Israeli authorities Wednesday from building a fence between this newly autonomous town and Israeli-ruled territory. The protesters blocked tractors sent to begin work on the fence, complaining that the barrier would cut across land belonging to residents of Kalkilya, which came under control of Palestinian National Authority on Dec. 16. Authorities ordered a temporary halt to work due to the protest. But the coordinator of Israeli activities in the West Bank, General Oren Shohor, insisted work on the planned eight-kilometre fence would continue. Prime Minister Shimon Peres personally approved construction of the fence, Gen. Shohor told Israeli radio, adding that the barrier was "absolutely necessary to maintain security" in Israeli areas near Kalkilya. The town of 40,000 lies on the western edge of the West Bank, just 15 kilometres from central Tel Aviv and barely a kilometre from the outer suburbs of Israel's largest city. But local residents argued that the fence is unnecessary, saying they have always maintained good relations with their Israeli neighbours.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الرابطة

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath has said that the 1995 "Women of Peace" award that was granted to her by the Together for Peace Foundation was a clear recognition of the advances of Jordan in the area of education and that while the Kingdom has achieved remarkable levels of progress in the sector it faces the challenge of maintaining the achieved levels as well as continuously upgrading them. In an interview with the Jordan Times, Her Royal Highness particularly referred to special education programmes for children with learning disabilities at the YWCA Centre for Special Education, profession-oriented training courses at the Princess Sarvath Community College and the experience of the Amman Baccalaureate School whose orientation is to serve the community rather than commercial objectives. See report on page 7

Israel ready to drop demand for Golan early warning posts

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel might be willing to set aside its demand for Israeli round-based early warning stations in the Golan Heights Syria agreed to pull troops back from the border, Deputy Defence Minister Ori Orr said Wednesday.

The suggestion was a new sign of flexibility in Israel's negotiating position, one officials say is designed to lure Syria into serious negotiations. Israel's demand for early warning stations — made to ensure its security after a withdrawal of Israeli troops prompted Syria to suspend talks last June.

Mr. Orr, in an interview with the Associated Press, said a "cocktail of factors" could determine Israel's security needs in the Golan Heights.

These include the size of the Syrian army, and how far away Syrian troops are stationed from the Israel-Syria border.

"If you have a deep de-

militarised zone, then there can be a different way of looking at things," said Mr. Orr.

There is currently an offensive fighting force of five to six divisions of Syrian troops, or more than 60,000, deployed between Damascus and the Golan Heights.

In place of Israeli monitoring stations, Mr. Orr said satellites and positions manned by non-Israelis could be used instead.

"We have satellites and can use American satellites for pictures every day, twice a day," he said, adding that Israel might also consider letting peacekeepers man ground stations.

"You can put other people to those stations," he said.

Mr. Orr, a retired army major general who commanded the Syrian front as well as troops in Lebanon, said the need for ground stations should be looked at in the context of overall negotiations.

If offensive Syrian forces were 200 kilometres from Israel, then Israel would be ready to discuss dropping its demand for Israeli monitoring stations, he said.

On the other hand, if Syria insisted on keeping its forces only 20 kilometres from the border, then Israel would have to keep a ground station to report on Syrian military movements and provide advance indications of any attack.

"It is a cocktail of factors, and we should consider all of them," he said.

He also indicated that Israel was now emphasising the need for movement on a broad range of issues, a shift in focus from the government of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who insisted that security issues be resolved first.

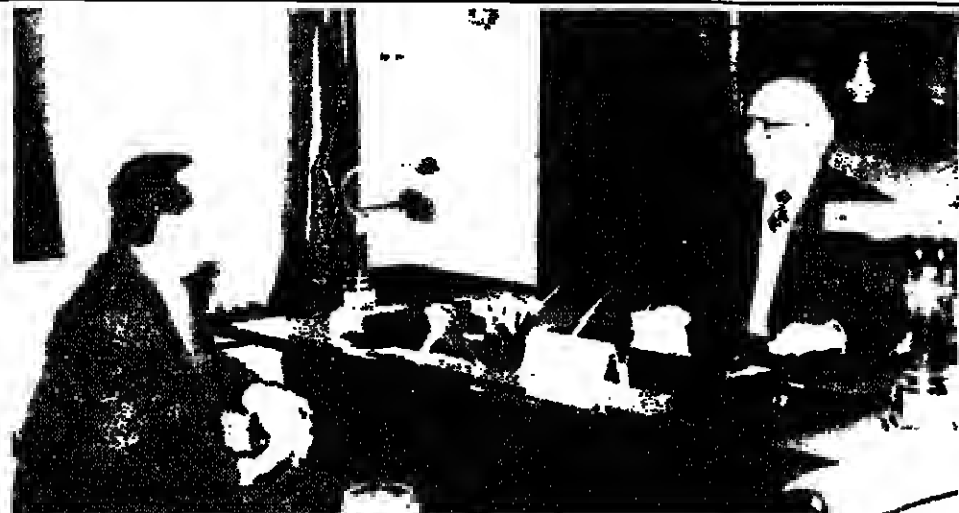
"We should talk about total peace. The quality of peace is very important. All these warning requirements are in the context of overall negotiations."

(Continued on page 7)

King visits Prime Ministry and GHQ

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday visited the Prime Ministry and held a meeting with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. They discussed a number of issues of immediate concern to the public, and the King passed directives to the prime minister about them.

King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, also called at the General Headquarters (GHQ) and met the chairman of the



Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abdul Hafez Mirai, and some of his senior assistants as well as the commander of the Jordanian Air Force. Discussion covered issues of concern to the Armed Forces.

Eritrea should quit island before talks begin — Saleh

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemen demanded Wednesday that Eritrea withdraw from a disputed Red Sea island before negotiations on its status can begin.

Eritrea must also release Yemeni prisoners and agree to bilateral talks on the entire maritime borders between the two countries, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said.

"Yemen told the Eritrean authorities there were three conditions for resuming negotiations" on the strategic Hanish Al Kabir island, Mr. Saleh told political party leaders.

These are the "evacuation by Eritrean forces from the island ... the release of Yemenis captured during the Eritrean invasion of Hanish Al Kabir, and the start of bilateral negotiations to define the maritime borders, in line with international law and treaties."

Eritrea seized the volcanic island on Monday after a three-day battle, during which it said it captured more than 180 Yemeni soldiers.

Mr. Saleh said Yemen had 185 troops garrisoned on the island, and not 500 as previously announced by Sanaa. Seventy-five soldiers were

deployed on Hanish Al Kabir before the Eritrean seaborne attack on Friday, and 110 more were sent to the island on Saturday, the president said.

"Given the size of the Eritrean forces on the island, we gave the order to surrender" to avoid bloodshed, he said.

Yemen lost three soldiers in the fighting, while Eritrea conceded it had lost six.

"Yemen affirms its sovereignty over Hanish Al Kabir and reserves the right to win it back through all legitimate measures, while

(Continued on page 7)

Kabariti, Iryani discuss situation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Karim Kabariti on Wednesday phoned his Yemeni counterpart Abdul Karim Iryani and discussed efforts for the demarcation of maritime borders between Yemen and Eritrea following Eritrea's invasion of a Yemeni island in the Red Sea this week, the Jordan News Agency, Petra reported.

Mr. Kabariti voiced Jordan's support for Yemen's efforts to reach a settlement for the dispute based on a deal reached between the two countries during Dr. Iryani's recent visit to Eritrea, Petra said.

That deal provided for the two countries to reach an agreement through bilateral negotiations and if the negotiations failed to resort to international arbitration or refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

Mr. Kabariti and Dr. Iryani agreed to pursue their consultations and coordination to solve the issue by diplomatic means, Petra said.

Eritrea said that the two sides agreed before the flare-up to refer the sovereignty dispute to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Yemen said it had no objection provided its forces withdrew from the island

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat seals Gulf rift, but major aid unlikely

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has repaired links with most Gulf Arab states, but they will unlikely be as generous in aid given their financial woes, officials said on Wednesday.

Mr. Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the leading candidate in the first general Palestinian elections on Jan. 20, was accorded a head-of-state welcome when he visited Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this week.

He used the visit to urge Kuwait to improve ties with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"We hope that our brothers in Kuwait, who have always supported the cause of the Palestinian people, will reply to our calls to overcome what has troubled our relations and restore our ties," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat's trip ended more than five years of estrangement by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) caused by his support for Iraq when its forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

"Gulf states are ready to help the Palestinians rebuild their entry in the self-rule areas, but I don't think they will give us they used to do before the invasion of Kuwait," said a Gulf official, who requested anonymity.

"We have our own priorities now. Our domestic development commitments are growing while oil revenues are diminishing because of weak prices."

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — were the main financial backers of the PLO before the Gulf war, providing it with more than \$2.5 billion.

The figure does not include donations and personal grants from Gulf heads of state, sheikhs and wealthy businessmen. The funds have helped the PLO overcome severe cash problems and were used to finance its fight against Israel before the two sides signed a peace accord in

(Continued on page 7)

NATO takes over Bosnia peacekeeping from U.N.

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO took over the United Nations' much-criticised Bosnia peacekeeping role on Wednesday, ready to meet any challenge with elite troops and heavy weapons.

NATO-led soldiers, ordered to undertake a potentially hazardous mission with "robust" tactics, formally replaced the world body's under-armed international force that operated with a weak mandate amid brutal fighting.

The Western alliance launched the biggest military operation in its near-50-year history on schedule at 11 a.m. (1000 GMT).

It will oversee a deal dividing Bosnia, one half ruled by a Muslim-Croat federation and the rest by separatist Serbs, after a war that horrified the world with revelations of atrocities, "ethnic cleansing" and concentration camps.

A ceremony formalising the transfer of authority had to be postponed after fog delayed the arrival of NATO commander Admiral Leighton Smith.

Adm. Smith's flight from Zagreb in Croatia circled Sarajevo's battle-scarred airport for half an hour waiting for a blanket of fog to lift, but eventually gave up and headed for the Croatian Adriatic port of Split.

In his absence the outgoing U.N. commander, General Bertrand Janvier, and Lieutenant-General Michael Walker, commander of NATO ground forces, announced that the handover had taken place and the formal ceremony would be held later.

The world's most powerful

military alliance will use might, intended to defeat the Soviet Union in a war that never came, to cajole and, if necessary, force Bosnia's warring parties to implement last week's Paris peace accord.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright lashed out at Yugoslavia for saying that Muslims had killed each other during a battle over the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica last July — an event that helped unleash momentum for today's NATO mission.

The U.N., smarting from criticism of its operation, defended the performance of its staff in saving many thousands from starvation, and pledged to go on working in the civilian sector.

Just before the handover, French U.N. forces in the Bosnian capital, most of whom will be staying as part of the multi-national, 60,000-strong NATO peace implementation mission, made final preparations for the switch.

The Blue Berets and helmets of the ill-starred U.N. peacekeeping operation will be replaced by the greens, blacks, reds and purples of national armies and their different units.

Overnight, many of the white vehicles of the French army fleet in the city had the letters U.N. scraped off and the initials IFOR (Implementation Force) painted on.

In the northern Bosnian city of Tuzla, base for 20,000 U.S. troops joining "Operation Joint Endeavour," the blue-painted sign declaring "U.N. Air Base Tuzla — Welcome" was taken down a few minutes before the hand-

over and a new one erected. Many of the U.N. troops in Tuzla began leaving immediately, but many more were due to stay after packing away their blue berets and donning their national ones.

During its 3½ year mission the U.N. took the brunt of criticism for the international community's inability to end Europe's worst conflict since World War II, which claimed about 200,000 lives, displaced between two and three million and ripped the country apart.

The U.N. countered by arguing it was given a weak mandate by governments lacking the political will to settle the issue.

Some of the frustration of the U.N. mission came out on Wednesday as one U.N. official, waiting for the start of the handover ceremony, said: "NATO has been behind schedule on everything else, so why should they be on time for this?"

The buildup to the NATO Bosnia mission has been dogged by delays due to bad weather, red tape and, in some cases, lack of organisation.

The 16 NATO nations will be joined by units from a further 16 non-alliance countries, many of them former communist enemies, including Russia, in a groundbreaking display of international cooperation.

"If we get it right, the European security scene will never be the same again, if we screw it up it could be disastrous," said a senior NATO diplomat.

Gen. Walker said on Tuesday he believed the organisation was up to the job.

Jordan will not mediate, backs Yemen, Lawzi says

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan said Wednesday it would not mediate in the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict over a Red Sea island, but stressed its support for Yemen and expressed hopes that the conflict would be solved diplomatically.

Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, told the Jordan Times at the end of a meeting between the Senate's foreign committee with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, that Jordan fully supports the Yemeni

position but "there is no plan for Jordanian mediation" in the conflict.

"We hope and call for an end to the conflict diplomatically, through negotiations and in accordance with international legitimacy," Mr. Lawzi said. "Jordan supports its brethren in Yemen and supports a diplomatic solution between Yemen and Eritrea."

Mr. Lawzi said Jordan sought strong and close ties with Arab countries and was keen on maintaining cordial relations with countries, bordering it — Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria.

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas refuses compromise to take part in elections

CAIRO (AFP) — Hamas hardliners on Wednesday refused to budge over their boycott of historic Palestinian elections on the third day of reconciliation talks here with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Hamas spokesman Mohammad Nazzari said: "Our delegation has clearly set out its position on the boycott of the elections and discussions are continuing. I don't think there can be any compromise on the issue, nor partial solutions."

He said the PNA delegation had "proposed participating in Jerusalem as a compromise, but we are treating the manner in a global way

and not partially."

But Palestinian Justice Minister Frieib Abu Meddein was more upbeat saying: "We are expecting a Hamas answer on its participation today. The answer might not be 100 per cent positive but I think the movement will find a way of participating in the poll because we have to reach a compromise."

He told journalists there were still "urgent matters to settle mainly (respecting) the international commitments made by the Palestinian Authority, the elections and relations between Hamas and the authority."

More than million Palestinians are due to vote for an

83-member self-rule council and a president of an executive authority in elections on Jan. 20 to be held under deals struck with Israel.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is fiercely opposed to the autonomy accords and has so far refused to take part in the poll in the autonomous areas of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and in East Jerusalem.

Mr. Arafat, who heads the self-rule authority, is expected in Cairo on Thursday after a tour of the Gulf Arab states.

He has made moves to try to end divisions with Hamas and bring it into the election process.

On Tuesday the PNA delegation suggested in a compromise that Hamas should take part in the elections in East Jerusalem.

A member of the delegation, Nabil Amr, said a huge turnout was needed in the Holy City to "reinforce the Palestinian position in negotiations on the city's final status" with Israel.

He added the Islamic fundamentalist group showed an "understanding" concerning the election of a self-rule government and had "not taken a definite position on its participation."

Hamas has also so far refused to renounce a halt to attacks on Israelis, a key de-

mand by Mr. Arafat for any reconciliation.

"A halt to military operations against Israel has not yet been discussed and we will make our position known during the talks," Mr. Nazzari said.

However a statement published Tuesday in Damascus said Hamas would continue "the Jihad (holy war) as long as the Israeli occupation lasts and it is not ready whatever the condition to end its resistance."

So far the only tangible result of the talks has been an agreement the two sides reached Tuesday to avoid the use of force in settling their differences.

Election results will not change policy, Yeltsin says

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin, in his first comment since voters ignored his appeal not to bring back "forces of the past," said on Wednesday a communist revival in Sunday's parliamentary election would not bring policy change.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying he was not worried about the strong communist performance in Sunday's election to the State Duma lower house of parliament.

"We have no reason for concern or to regard the election as a tragedy," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Speaking during an awards ceremony at the Barvikha sanatorium outside Moscow where he is recovering from a

mild heart attack, Mr. Yeltsin, 64, said Russia would "manage to follow the same political course as before."

The Communist Party, riding a wave of discontent at Russia's painful economic reforms, topped the polls on Sunday and is heading for around a third of the seats in Duma, well above its nearest rivals.

Two of the main losers in the election cried foul on Wednesday, alleging widespread rigging to keep their parties and other opposition movements out of parliament.

"There is an open and crude falsification under way," former Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi told Reuters by telephone. "The mood of the people in

the country will be such after this fraud that we can expect serious upheavals."

Mr. Rutskoi said his hard-line nationalist Derzhava movement had received 9.4 per cent of the vote rather than the 2.5 per cent given in official results.

Retired General Alexander Lebed, interviewed by telephone earlier, also alleged fraud, neither man offered detailed proof of their allegations.

"I am not going to give any comments before I investigate this terrible trickery for myself," he told Reuters. "What has happened is clearly falsification."

Mr. Lebed's grouping, the Congress of Russian Communities, failed to breach the five per cent barrier in official

results despite poll predictions of a better outcome. Mr. Lebed made sure of an individual seat, topping the poll in Tula south of Moscow.

Foreign observers have mostly described the election as free and fair but have criticised the slow publication of results.

Mr. Yeltsin downplayed the Communists' strong showing in the election and said he would be able to work with a mixed legislature.

"I'm sure that the majority of Russians don't stand for communism. Twenty per cent is just 20 per cent," he said.

"In some countries ... there are more communists in parliaments, but there they find ways of interaction and normal democratic development."

On Tuesday, one of Mr. Yeltsin's aides, Georgy Satarov, told Russian television that the president may offer some lesser cabinet positions to the communists.

The comments by Mr. Yeltsin, an outspoken communist-basher, indicated he is willing to try to pacify voters and hold off a rising opposition. A likely reelection bid hangs in the balance.

The Communists, intent on capturing Mr. Yeltsin's job at the polls next June, are all but certain to reject such an olive branch in the final months of his term.

Communist leader Genady Zyuganov told reporters again Wednesday that the government must respond to the voting results by making big changes.

Advertisement

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ROYAL JORDANIAN

Setting New Standards

Islamic party surges in Turkey

ANKARA (AP) — Prime Minister Tansu Ciller campaigns on a platform of hardship now, improvements later. The Welfare Party wows voters with free coal in the stove this icy winter.

A few days before the Dec. 24 parliamentary election, dozens of people in Ankara's lower-income Sentepe district were waiting for the city government's bread truck, which delivers loaves for six cents less than the market price. Monthly salaries average between \$100 and \$150.

Ankara's city government is in the hands of Welfare, which advocates changing the free-market system and revising Western-oriented laws.

When the votes are counted, Ms. Ciller, Muslim Turkey's first woman premier, could lose the premiership of this NATO country that she is trying to move even closer to the West, and parliament's biggest party could be Welfare, which opposes the secularism

that for seven decades has been the basis of modern Turkey.

Opinion polls are banned in the final days of the campaign, but Cemile Ates said she will be one of the 21 to 26 per cent of voters surveyed last week who said they would back Welfare.

The 25-year-old, her cheeks reddened by the freezing weather and her head covered with an Islamic style scarf, was in line for the bread.

"You wait two, sometimes, four hours. But it is worth it," she said.

Ms. Ciller's centre-right True Path was estimated to take 14 to 19.5 per cent, with Motherland, left, main centre-right opposition, predicted to poll 19.5-22 per cent.

Twenty per cent were undecided at the last polls. The final day of campaigning is Saturday.

A strong showing by Welfare could set the stage for a parliament where centre-right parties team up with Islamic parties on such common

goals as lifting bans on wearing Islamic headgear at universities and allowing workers to take hours out to pray on Fridays.

Helping Welfare is the split among centre-right votes, as True Path and Motherland compete against each other.

People are trying to figure out whether they should choose True Path or Motherland to prevent a Welfare victory," said Yavuz Sabuncu, a political science professor.

But the election itself is largely about economic hardships, including Turkey's inflation, now 90 per cent a year.

The poor who migrated from country villages hoping to find work in the cities eat at Welfare soup kitchens, use Welfare health services, and in Ankara, swim in a sex-segregated swimming pool opened last summer.

In winter, thoughts turn to keeping warm, and the party donates coal and 10-kilo packages of food as part of the election campaign.

"I am thankful to the Welfare. They provided me this year with beans, rice, sugar and oil and coal for the winter," said Turkan Tosbas, a mother of five.

It is not clear where Welfare gets all its funds. Unconfirmed reports say the party is backed by Islamic groups in the West and possibly Saudi Arabia.

Welfare's leader Necmettin Erbakan repeats his promise in each campaign speech. "Your buying power will triple. Production will triple, allowing everyone to have a job," he explains how Welfare envisions society.

Ms. Ciller promised her austerity programme will bring single-digit inflation in four years.

It was her belt-tightening crackdown, including strict limits on public salaries, that set the stage for the election.

A month-long strike by some 300,000 workers in October provoked the withdrawal of Ms. Ciller's main coalition partner.

Bethlehem awaits free Christmas

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Santa Claus and tinsel garlands vie with Palestinian flags and portraits of Yasser Arafat as the birthplace of Jesus prepares to celebrate its first Christmas under Palestinian rule.

Mr. Arafat's portraits almost outnumber the Christmas decorations, amid mutterings of discontent from Christian residents of Bethlehem ahead of a joint celebration with their Muslim fellow Palestinians.

Israeli troops are due to pull out Thursday night, ending 25 years of occupation, and the small Manger Square nestled alongside the Church of the Nativity where Christmas Eve mass will be celebrated Sunday is already awash with decorations.

Palestinians demanded that Bethlehem gain self-rule ahead of Christmas as part of agreements under which Israel traded most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in exchange for peace with the Palestinian residents.

Mr. Arafat, president of the Palestinian self-rule authority, plans a much publicised Christmas Eve visit to attend midnight mass as one

of the highlights of the year-end arrival of autonomy in six main West Bank towns.

The Bethlehem handover had been due to take place Monday, but was held up for four days as Israel rushed to complete a by-pass road that will allow Jewish settlers living south of the town to travel to Jerusalem without passing through Palestinian-ruled lands.

Thousands of penants bearing Mr. Arafat's portrait hang from wires strung over Manger Square while another giant picture covers the entire side of another building in the town of 30,000.

The omnipresence of the veteran Palestinian leader does not please all local residents.

"Christmas in Bethlehem is going to be an Arafat Christmas," complained one Christian shopkeeper who asked not to be identified.

"We Christians are worried." About 30 per cent of the town's inhabitants are Christians.

"Our Christians are going to be Palestinian, and above all Muslim. Thousands of Muslims are going to come see Arafat. They are hijacking

our main religious holiday."

Other Bethlehem residents see things differently.

"It's our first Palestinian Christmas, we're going to eat and drink even more than in past years," said Ghassan Daoud, 31, an electrician helping string up lights and Christmas decorations in the town.

"I have been working like a mad man" to get the town ready, he adds.

Mr. Daoud and his colleagues rushed to finish the preparations Tuesday, anchoring giant lighted stars to the street lamps, hanging golden bells and red and white ribbons on the cypress trees and spray painting decorations on building walls alongside anti-Israeli slogans.

Noah Salamah, a 43-year-old Muslim, said also he would celebrate Christmas "not for Arafat, but so my kids can see Santa Claus and all the lights and so we can congratulate our Christian brothers."

But all is not going smoothly.

Sister Francisco Therese, member of a Carmelite mission founded in Bethlehem in

1846, said she had no plans to attend this year's midnight mass at the Church of the Nativity.

"I'm not very reassured. I don't know how it's going to go this year," she said.

"The stage where choirs usually sing hasn't even been set up yet," she said, pointing to the small square outside the church. "The church is small and the square, too, and all the Palestinians are going to flock here."

"But I'm still happy that the Israelis are leaving, there will be law and order and the extremists won't be able to throw stones at me like they did in the past," she said.

Israeli officials have been trying to help with the organisation of the first Palestinian Christmas, but a visit Tuesday by Tourism Minister Uzi Baram to discuss the situation was cancelled at the last minute "for security reasons" by Mayor Elias Freij.

City officials said Mr. Freij had been angered by the heavy-handed approach of Israeli soldiers and plainclothes security agents sent to Bethlehem ahead of Mr. Baram's arrival.

Rabin's widow refuses to criticise his guards

PARIS (R) — The widow of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said on Tuesday she had confidence in her late husband's bodyguards despite a videotape of his murder raising questions about security arrangements.

"For many years we have totally trusted those in charge of my husband's security," Leah Rabin told French Television TF1.

"They did everything to protect him and my attitude towards them will never change," she said in a live interview as French television channel France 2 simultaneously broadcast the videotape showing the assassin stalking her husband before shooting him in the back.

Leah Rabin has said she did not want to watch the videotape and the painful moment would remain with her forever.

She was in Paris for a tribute to her late husband sponsored by President Jac-

ques Chirac that included Franz Schubert's unfinished symphony, a reference to her husband's interrupted quest for peace in the Middle East.

She said that if security services had made any mistake it was in failing to believe, despite warnings, that they had to protect Mr. Rabin against a fellow Israeli.

"This seemed absolutely inconceivable... if (Rabin) had been asked the day he was assassinated if a Jew could murder him, he would have said it was ridiculous," she said.

"I suppose that those who were responsible for his security had the greatest difficulty in radically changing attitude and begin watching Jews rather than Arabs," she said.

The tribute to Mr. Rabin included a videotaped interview with Morocco's King Hassan in which he said that in their last meeting in New York he had warned Mr. Rabin to be more careful.

U.N. renews mandate of Cyprus peace force

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Security Council unanimously approved on Tuesday a six-month renewal of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) until June 30, 1996.

There were no speeches and the council meeting lasted only a few minutes.

UNFICYP, now comprising some 1,150 troops and 34 civilian police, has been stationed on the island since 1964 to help keep peace between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

The force includes contingents from Argentina, Austria and Britain and smaller numbers of troops from Canada, Finland, Hungary and Ireland, as well as civilian police from Australia and Ireland.

"Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974 when Turkish troops landed in the north of the island in reaction to a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece. In 1983 the Turkish Cypriots proclaimed their own state, recognised only by Ankara.

The council resolution also

He also said the National Guard in the south, "though weaker by far than the Turkish forces in Cyprus, has continued its comprehensive upgrading programme."

The council resolution welcomed a recent humanitarian review by UNFICYP into the living conditions of Greek Cypriots and Maronites still living in the north and of Turkish Cypriots living in the south.

expressed concern over the continuing modernisation and upgrading of military forces in Cyprus and lack of progress towards a significant reduction in the number of foreign troops there.

Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, in a recent report, criticised the "excessive levels of military forces and armaments" in Cyprus and the rate at which they were being strengthened.

"In terms of the ratio of military personnel to inhabitants, with over 30,000 Turkish troops and 4,500 Turkish Cypriot troops, the northern part of the island remains one of the most densely militarised areas in the world."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oldest immigrant, 110, arrives in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The oldest immigrant in the history of Israel — a 110-year-old woman from Chechnya in southern Russia — has arrived in the Jewish state. Israel's quasi-governmental Jewish Agency said on Wednesday that Tzipora Matveyeva, born in Chechnya on April 14, 1885, flew to Tel Aviv on Tuesday from Pysatgors in Russia with her son, 74, to join her family in northern Israel. She was taken in a wheelchair into the airport terminal and given flowers. In a news release, the agency said she was the oldest immigrant to Israel since the state's founding in 1948.

Egypt, Syria at odds over performers

CAIRO (AP) — The latest crisis in the Middle East will not threaten the peace process, but it could reduce the variety of performers at Arab clubs. The weekly Al Dustour newspaper reported Wednesday that Syria and Egypt have squared off over the rights of performers, including belly dancers, to work in each other's country. The paper said "the political crisis" began when a Syrian singer tried to commit a suicide after Egyptian authorities notified her she was being thrown out of Egypt. Her name was not revealed. Syria asked Cairo to reverse the decision or face the possibility that some 820 Egyptian belly dancers currently working in Syrian night clubs will be kicked out, the paper said. Egyptian performers are known to pressure the government to limit foreign talent so they can have more opportunities for work. Last year, the popular Syrian singer Mayada Al Hanawi had to appeal personally to Egypt's Information Ministry to gain entry to the lucrative Egyptian market, the paper said. Egypt has some 12,000 professional belly dancers, and many of them are working in other Arab countries.

Group denies killing Lebanon Sunni chief

BEIRUT (R) — A small Palestinian group denied on Wednesday Lebanese army charges that its members killed Sunni Islamist leader Nizar Al Halabi or that it planned a campaign of Christmas bombings. The army said on Tuesday it had arrested Halabi's suspected killers, three Lebanese and two Palestinians, who were members of a radical group called Eshbat Al Ansar (band of supporters). But Eshbat Al Ansar, headed by Palestinian Ahmad Abdul Karim Saadi, known as Abu Mohjen, denied any links to the murder of Halabi, head of the pro-Syrian Al Abhsh group who was shot by masked gunmen on Aug. 31 in west Beirut. "We deny... the serious accusations against the emir of Eshbat Al Ansar, Ahmad Abdul Karim Saadi. Eshbat Al Ansar is not responsible for any act mentioned," it said in a statement in "Ain Al Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in South Lebanon.

Dalyell criticises expulsion of Libyan envoy

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's decision to expel a top Libyan diplomat was criticised in parliament Wednesday by a senior Labour member of parliament. Tam Dalyell said he had known Khalifa Bazelya for three years due to his investigations into the Lockerbie bombing. "I really am astonished that this man should be considered to warrant expulsion from this country," he told in a debate. Mr. Bazelya was ordered earlier this month to leave Britain by Christmas Day for activities incompatible with his status. British government officials said Bazelya was involved in intimidation and surveillance of Libyan dissidents. Libya ordered out the head of Britain's interests' section in Tripoli on Monday in a tit-for-tat action for Mr. Bazelya's expulsion. He is Libya's most senior diplomat in Britain and has been expelled because of concern over his activities among dissident Libyan groups.

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PROGRAMME TWO
13:15 Tris — The Happy Professor
13:15 Fireman Sam
13:25 Magazine — Archimede
13:50 My Secret Identity
14:10 NBA
15:00 The New Leave it to Beaver
15:30 Doc — The White Plague
16:30 Gillette World Sport Special
17:00 Sophie Et Virginie
17:30 Varieties — Le Monde Est A Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Archimede
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Carol and Company
20:00 The Album Show
20:50 The New Avengers
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature film: "The Man Upstairs"
23:50 Series — The Fifth Missile

PRAYER TIMES

05:04 Sunrise
06:26 Sunrise
11:33 Dhuhr
14:17 Asr
16:40 Maghreb
18:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swidieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Sante Church Tel. 661757
Ternavoda Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 632826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 843457
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 854932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies sunny to partly cloudy and winds southerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3/13
Aqaba 10/22
Deserts 2/14

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Jordan Valley 10 / 22
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10 Aqaba 21, Humidity
readings: Amman 91 per cent,
Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Adnan Zaghoul 898140
Dr. Jamal Jorash 847351
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyir 620115
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636750
Yacoub pharmacy 646845
Shinciani pharmacy 637680
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741
Al Ouds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Lawzi 989601

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 110230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Ahdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680101
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 184-53281
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53280

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shinciani 407071
Shinciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 661273/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Italian, Al-Muhajirin 771103
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 755112/6
Army 3 Marks 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 109183323
Zarqa National Hospital 109186732
Ibn Sina Hospital 109186732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 109186990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02375555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02372275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital 023747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03134111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shinciani 407071
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Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 755112/6
Army 3 Marks 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:20 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:20 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:20 Colombo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:35 Moscow (RJ)
18:25 Athens (RJ)
18:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
19:10 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:15 Al Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
19:35 Rome (RJ)
00:10 Larnaca (RJ)
01:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
12:40 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
12:40 Sharjah (AH)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:00 Doha (Q7)
16:10 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
01:15 London (KL)
01:30 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
07:15 Moscow (RJ)
08:30 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:05 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
12:00 Paris (AF)
12:05 London (RJ)
12:15 Athens (RJ)
20:10 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:45 Larnaca (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:35 Jeddah (RJ)
22:05 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:50 Beirut, London (BA)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Muscat (GF)
13:30 Algiers (AF)
14:30 Riyadh (SV)

14:40 Istanbul (O7)
17:15 Dubai (EK)
21:10 Cairo (MS)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)
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Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 500
Banana 680
Banana (Mukannam) 620
Banana (imported) 880/700
Cabbage 100 / 50
Carrot 260/150
Cauliflower 110/50
Cucumbers (small) 200 / 120
Eggplant 200 / 100
Garlic 750/500
Grape Fruit 220/150
Lemon 250/180
Marrow (large) 120 / 80
Marrow (small) 220 / 150
Onion (green) 220/150
Onion (dry) 230 / 150
Orange 540/400
Pepper (hot) 260 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 260/180
Potato 260 / 180
Radish 150/80
Spinach 120/80
String Beans 530 / 450
Tangerine 270/200
Tomato 170/100

Jordan calls for improvement in educational standards, services in refugee schools

CAIRO (Petra) — Jordan has requested the Arab League to increase the number of technical and educational cadres to help improve the standard of education at schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) especially in the Palestinian territories.

Jordan's view was conveyed by Yusef Orabi at a meeting in Cairo by the Council for Educational Affairs of the Arab League, organised by the Arab League and which took place between Dec. 13 and 17.

Mr. Orabi, head of the Education Section of the Department of Palestinian Affairs, relayed Jordan's view in a working paper which noted that UNRWA schools lack vital services like libraries, laboratories and com-

puters.

Referring to UNRWA educational services in Jordan, Mr. Orabi said the reduction of the agency's annual budget has had a negative impact on schools.

Jordan has been closely cooperating with Palestinian educational authorities over the years to try to mend damage to the Palestinian educational system in the past years of occupation, Mr. Orabi said.

He also noted that Jordan has been urging donor nations and the world community at large to offer financial assistance to the agency.

According to Mr. Orabi, the Jordanian government has been shouldering the burden of aiding the agency's educational budget at camps and schools,

citing Jordan's supply of textbooks, which cost JD 171,160 as one example.

The meeting has recommended that the Arab League pursue its efforts with UNRWA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to organise a general conference in Cairo in March next year to discuss appropriate measures for the rehabilitation of the educational system in the Palestinian territories as well as in Arab countries hosting refugees.

Taking part in the meeting were delegates from Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and Syria, as well as the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ALESCO) and UNESCO.

House supports investigation into prices of pharmaceutical products

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday strongly supported a proposal by one member to look into the prices of medicine as well as into the monopoly of merchants and the government on the prices of pharmaceutical products.

Deputy Nazih Amarin, who forwarded the proposal, said recent increases in the prices of medicine were unjustifiable, and accused dealers, the Pharmacists' Association, and even the Pharmaceutical Control Committee, of monopoly and a lack of objectivity.

"I know that the additional increase over the original

price reaches 20, 30 or even 50 per cent...but a 400 per cent increase shows that something is wrong," Dr. Amarin said.

Medicine is exempt from customs in Jordan.

Dr. Amarin, who has a clinic in Kerak, cited the example of the cost of Tifanil, a medication for allergies, in the markets.

While the government's price is fixed at 12 fils for one tablet of Tifanil, it is sold at 116 fils in the market—a margin of profit of 900 per cent, he said.

"We are talking here about a very important commodity that could not be substituted. While we enjoy health insurance and can even go abroad to receive treatment, people are suffering over

the high increases in prices they cannot afford," he said.

The doctor went on to explain how the situation in the market encourages such "profiteers to exploit the people" and how they are able to monopolise the price of medicine.

He said the Pharmacists' Association is dominated by "some who own more than one pharmacy" and are able to increase prices as they see fit, and furthermore that "medicine control representatives are not neutral because they do not adhere to the pharmacy law."

The law states that pharmacists should be committed to only one job, he said.

"We find that one of the responsible members of the control committee owns

more than one pharmacy or is a partner in a drugstore," he said. "They cannot be neutral, (so) how can a person be a defendant and a prosecutor at the same time?" he said.

Dr. Amarin said that subsidising medicine is not less important than subsidising sugar and rice.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh stressed that the information given by Dr. Amarin should be looked into and proposed to refer the whole issue of medicine prices and the monopoly of merchants and controllers to the House's Health Committee.

The House voted in favour of the proposal.



Housing and Urban Development Director General Yusef Hiyasat Wednesday signs a contract with a local firm for the construction of the third part of the Abu Nuseir housing project (Petra photo)

Department to carry out housing scheme for private sector employees

AMMAN (J.T.) — A local construction firm was Wednesday awarded a contract by the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) to build the infrastructure for the third part of the second stage of the Abu Nuseir Housing project at a cost of JD 1.7 million.

Speaking after the signing ceremony held at HUDD, department director general Yusef Hiyasat said the local firm will carry out infrastructure services on an area of 235 dunums.

This particular housing project will benefit private sector employees, according to the department director general.

The land will be divided into 475 units for a housing

scheme, Mr. Hiyasat said. The earlier phases of the Abu Nuseir Housing estate located north-west of Amman were assigned only for government employees but this project will benefit employees of the private sector who will be able to build homes on units given to them by HUDD, according to Mr. Hiyasat.

In his statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Hiyasat explained that the local firm which is undertaking this project will build 96,950 square metres of roads, an 11,720 metre long water network, a 1,255 metre long sewage system as well as electric and telephone networks, in addition to retaining walls, public

squares and gardens.

There will be a special area for car parks and gardens and public buildings, according to Mr. Hiyasat. He noted that the current project falls within HUDD's five-year housing plans.

Two previous parts of the second stage of the Abu Nuseir project are still being completed, Mr. Hiyasat said, adding that these will provide 1,280 land units.

HUDD built the first stage of the Abu Nuseir Housing estate in the mid-1980s, providing 3,500 housing units for beneficiaries of the public sector and where nearly 3,500 families now live.

PSD report reveals '94 suicide statistics

AMMAN (J.T.) — A report by the Public Security Department (PSD) on crimes in Jordan showed that, in 1994, 83 people committed suicide and that 27 of those were women.

A total of 470 other people tried to kill themselves, the report, which was published in the Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday, said.

The report's statistics showed that Amman Governorate had the most suicides, accounting for 32.5 per cent of the total cases, followed by Irbid (19.3 per cent). The report said other cases were reported in Zarqa, Balqa, Karak, the hadra region, Mafraq, Ma'an, Aqaba, Madaba and Tafleh.

Among those in the suicide statistics were 12 non-Jordanian nationals—three Egyptians, three Iraqis, two Indians, and one each from America, Syria, Sri Lanka and Canada.

The report noted that the highest ratio among those who committed suicide belonged to the 18-27 age category and that most of those who took their lives were either unemployed, were students, were involved in family feuds, or were mentally handicapped.

The report pointed out that methods used by those who had committed suicide were by setting themselves alight, using fire arms, swallowing pesticides, jumping from high places or injecting themselves with poison.

UNRWA workers stage sit-in, strike

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — About 150 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) employees of four different executive committees staged a sit-in yesterday in front of the agency's headquarters to protest against the agency's failure to heed their demands.

All labourers at the agency's headquarters in Amman also went on strike yesterday against the agency's exclusion of Jordan from the pay raise it has given all its employees in other areas of operation.

An official source at UNRWA told the Jordan Times that the agency had given its employees in Syria a 15 per cent raise. Employees in Lebanon have been granted a five per cent raise.

But, he added the agency's workers in the West Bank and Gaza have rejected UNRWA's offer to give them a five per cent raise, citing the insuffi-

ciency of such a raise. They have been on a general strike since Dec. 4, he added.

"We received a phone call from UNRWA employees in the West Bank and Gaza in which they voiced their support for our decision to stage a general strike against the agency," said the source.

In a meeting they held during the four-hour strike, committee representatives decided that the proposed general strike will be effective as of the beginning of the second semester of the school year.

The source had told the Jordan Times that this strike will affect all services offered at UNRWA which include education, health, social and hygiene services.

"We are planning to send a letter to the Commissioner General, Ilter Turkmen to warn him that the committees will give him one month's notice, during which we might reverse our decision if he decides to give salary raises."

a committee representative said.

He added that the managing director and the head of human resources, Joseph Akar, sent a letter to the committee representatives urging

them to reverse their decision to stage the general strike.

"We informed him that our decision to reverse the strike is conditional upon UNRWA's decision to adhere to our demands," the source said.

Workshop agrees to amend media image of gender issues

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Improving women's images in the media and amending their image and presence in commercials, was the call Wednesday of participants of various media sectors during a training workshop on gender and the media.

Participants cited a need for the alteration and rephrasing of media terminology to fit the future needs of men and women in society.

Last week during the seminar, participants discussed the way women were handled by the local media and in commercials.

Journalists criticised commercials being broadcast or articles printed in

various media, which in most cases misinterpreted and misrepresented women's role and image.

In addition, they said, most commercials used stereotypical images of women to market products.

Participants also recommended that drama and music education be utilised to correct gender bias.

They also saw an urgent need to call on Jordanian Television and Radio to air programmes on the issues and to advise on the selection of children programmes that do not reinforce gender differences.

Participants also stressed the need to give prominence to the role of women through reporting and feature coverage.

Governmental organisa-

tions must play a role, according to the recommendations, to form a legislative forum which guarantees equality between men and women in all social, political, and economic aspects.

Participants finally recommended that the press coordinate with women's organisations to present recommendations on working methods that would allow the media to present contexts which are not gender biased or based on stereotypical gender images.

The aim of the seminar was to introduce gender concepts to journalists in order to help them relate the concept to their work. In addition, the gathering aimed at presenting media

as an integral tool in social structure changes because it affects beliefs and ideology concerning gender issues.

Participants from various media sectors discussed and exchanged points of view on the misconceived roles of women and men in society, the social and professional forms of discrimination against them, and the laws which work against women. A trainer from the West Bank, Jamileh Abu Duhou, arrived to Jordan and lectured media personnel and exposed them to the practice of work that is free of gender bias. The workshop was organised by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).



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هاتف ٩٢٩٩٢٠

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- "Le Roi et l'Oiseau", "Gouter" and "La Table Tourante" (for children) at the French Cultural Centre on Thursday from 4.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
- "Eduard Manet: Painter of Modern Life" (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 5.30 p.m.
- "Nuts" at the American Centre on Thursday at 5.00 p.m.

LECTURE

- "The Arab World and the Challenge of Nuclear Technology" (in Arabic) by Dr. Mohammad Jawad Amarah of Egypt at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6.00 p.m.

BAZAAR

- Christmas bazaar at the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ruwaq

Neighbourhood, Fuheis. (until Dec. 22)

CHRISTMAS SALE

- "Gifts at Beit Al Fuheis Hall, Fuheis (until Dec. 22).
- "Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassissieh at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

EXHIBITIONS

- Photography exhibition, Kingdom Of Peace, by Zohrab Markarian at The National Gallery, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Dec. 20th).
- Works by artist Hind Nasser at Darat Al Funun (until Jan. 6).
- Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4).

Street battles engulf Chechen city

MOSCOW (R) — Street fighting engulfed Chechnya's second biggest town, Gudermes, Wednesday as Russian troops tried to break through lines of Chechen rebels surrounding their trapped comrades. Russian news reports said. "Russian troops have begun the operation to liberate Gudermes from the fighters," ITAR-TASS news agency said, quoting military officials in the mountainous region. "Street bat-

les have been going on for several hours."

TASS said rebel forces, who had earlier dug in around Russian forces holding the local military headquarters and railway station, now occupied strategic positions around the city's hospital and administrative buildings.

The agency said fighters loyal to rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev had rejected a plea by local leaders to leave the town.

Russian public television said Russian military helicopters had been sent to Gudermes from Grozny, 30 kilometres away, to help break through Chechen lines.

It said Russian President Boris Yeltsin had congratulated Doku Zavgayev, elected local leader last week. Rebels first entered Gudermes last week on the first day of voting for the local leadership and the Russian parliament.

Rebels have also infiltrated the village of Urus-Martan in central Chechnya and attacked Russian posts in Grozny.

The fighting was the heaviest in the area since a ceasefire was signed between Russians and insurgents last July. Many of the separatists had pledged to disrupt the voting.

Thousands of Russian servicemen and civilians have died since President Yeltsin ordered troops into the region just over a year ago to crush the Chechens' bid for independence proclaimed in 1991.

Interfax said two Russian soldiers had been killed and three injured in the latest fighting. It said Russian forces had come under attack 23 times in the past 24 hours, including 15 times in Grozny.

Interfax reported late Tuesday that Russian forces had begun an assault to recapture Gudermes from a rebel force estimated at about 600 men.

Reporters prevented by Russian forces from approaching Gudermes heard the bombardment from a town seven kilometres away.

Refugees were pouring out of Gudermes in the afternoon.



Members of the Russian special forces arrive at their base after an attack on Chechen positions in Gudermes. Russian troops have begun an assault to recapture Gudermes from separatist rebels who took control seven days ago (AFP photo)



Russian soldiers take aim at Chechen separatist positions in Gudermes, Chechnya's second biggest town east of the capital, Grozny (AFP photo)

Clinton poll lead sags against Dole

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's approval rating sagged against Senate majority leader Bob Dole, the man heading his party's challenge to unseat Mr. Clinton next November, according to a poll released Tuesday.

The CNN/USA Today poll, conducted from Dec. 15 through 18, showed Mr. Clinton still holds a lead over Sen. Dole with 52 per cent of those surveyed saying they would vote for Mr. Clinton against 43 per cent for Sen. Dole.

In November, Mr. Clinton had a 16-point advantage over Sen. Dole with that poll showing him to have 55 per cent of the voters against Sen. Dole's 39 per cent.

The presidential vote is scheduled for

Nov. 5, 1996, but the first primary votes for the parties are scheduled to take place in eight weeks.

The poll also placed the blame on Congress rather than the president for the current budget impasse — the second time in as many months, leaving some 260,000 government employees out of work.

Sixty-two per cent of those asked said they blamed the Republican majority in Congress for the current deadlock.

However, the poll reported that Mr. Clinton, who generally gained public support from the first budget impasse in November, now had an unfavourable rating for his actions on the issue from 49 per cent of those polled.

2 killed, 5 wounded in Karachi attack

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Police said gunmen killed two Shi'ite Muslims and wounded five in a house being used as a mosque in the Pakistani city of Karachi Wednesday.

Two gunmen were later killed in a battle with police. The motive for the attack was not immediately clear.

Police said five gunmen had broken into the home of Major Ali Aaleq Jaffri, a retired officer who had turned one room of his house into a Shi'ite prayer hall. They attacked seven worshippers with rifle bullets and began tying them up.

Some of the victims resisted and the gunmen opened fire, killing Mr. Jaffri, 60, and Saadat Ali Shah, 65, and wounding the other five. Two were in critical condition.

A police patrol heard the shots and reached the spot as the gunmen were trying to escape. Two were killed in a shootout that followed, two were arrested and one scaled a wall and escaped.

Police said they were interrogating the gunmen to discover their motives. Hospital doctors would not let reporters see the wounded but their relatives confirmed the police account.

A series of bloody sectarian attacks rocked Karachi earlier this year, but there have been few reports of violence between militant Sunni and Shi'ite groups in Karachi in recent months.

In a separate incident, ambulance workers said they had found two unidentified bodies near Karachi Port Wednesday.

More than 1,800 people have been killed this year in sectarian, ethnic and political violence in the southern city of about 12 million people, Pakistan's commercial capital.

S. Korea gets a new-look cabinet

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam appointed a new-look cabinet Wednesday in an attempt to signal a clean break with military-backed predecessors accused of corruption.

A total of 11 changes were made in the 21-member cabinet, including in the key finance and economy portfolio.

On the day Mr. Kim made the sweeping cabinet reshuffle, authorities said his predecessors Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo would be charged formally Thursday with mutiny stemming from a 1979 coup they led.

Mr. Roh's trial on bribery charges began Monday, and Mr. Chun is expected to face corruption charges as well.

Mr. Kim appointed a new prime minister Tuesday. Lee Soo-Sung, a career academic who specialises in criminal law, is the fifth prime minister since Mr. Kim took power in 1993, and the reshuffle was one of several.

Political analysts said that under South Korea's presidential system, in which policy is driven by the head of state and his inner circle of aides, the cabinet changes were partly symbolic.

Mr. Kim is bringing in fresh faces untainted by

close association with his disgraced predecessors ahead of general elections scheduled for April.

At the same time he is freeing from the cabinet politicians of stature and experience to help salvage the gloomy electoral prospects of his ruling New Korea Party.

The party itself has recently been through a cosmetic revamp, changing its name from the Democratic Liberal Party.

"President Kim hopes the new cabinet will solve the pending issues of state affairs through daring reforms," said his spokesman, Yoon Yoo-Joon.

Outgoing Unification Minister Rha Woong-Bae was named minister of finance and economy in a move welcomed by investors, who pushed the stock index higher.

Mr. Rha, 61, headed the Economic Planning Board in 1988 under Mr. Roh. The board merged with the Ministry of Finance last year to form the Ministry of Finance and Economy.

Kwon O-Kie, president of the influential Dong-A Ilbo newspaper, one of South Korea's biggest dailies, was named new head of the Unification Ministry, which is responsible for relations with North Korea.

Opposition parties scoffed at the changes.

"The new cabinet is short of ability, new policies and vision," a spokesman for the main opposition National Congress For New Politics said. "The reshuffle only shows the government of Kim Young-Sam is suffering a lack of able men."

Economic analysts were more optimistic. "The economic team is the best choice, considering the mounting challenges facing the South Korean economy," said Lee Hahn-Ku, president of Daewoo Research Institute.

The Citizens' Coalition For Economic Justice, a powerful pressure group, said in a statement: "We are disappointed as we cannot see any new change and vitality in the reshuffle of the economy-related ministers."

The ministries of interior, construction and transportation, agriculture and fisheries, data and communications and education were given new heads.

But Foreign Minister Gong Ro-Myeong, Defence Minister Lee Yang-Ho and the Minister For International Trade and Industry Park Jae-Yoon kept their jobs.

Mr. Kim also replaced six of his aides, including his chief of staff and economic affairs secretary.

Mystery surrounds Angola plane crash victims

KINSHASA (R) — The identity of 139 people killed when a Zairean charter flight crashed in northern Angola Monday remained a mystery two days after the world's worst air disaster of 1995.

An Angolan government official said Wednesday the plane crashed in Angola's Lunda Norte province near the Zairean border and may have been on charter to Jonas Savimbi's opposition UNITA movement.

Zaire's transport minister, Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, said 139 of the 144 people on Monday's flight from Kinshasa had been killed.

Doctors said four of the survivors were in intensive care with serious burns. "There were 139 people on board, plus five crew. There were only five survivors," Mr. Thambwe Mwamba told Reuters Tuesday.

A ministry official said most of the dead were Angolans but had no further details. Mr. Thambwe Mwamba had no precise details on where the plane went down, its destination or on the identity of the passengers.

Lunda Norte Governor Moises Ndele told Angolan state radio the plane had crashed in the UNITA-controlled Cuango area of the province.

"The plane could have been rented by UNITA coming from Zaire via Damba, which is a region under UNITA's control in Uige province."

"The plane crashed around the Cuango area, an area under UNITA control," he said, adding that aircraft from Zaire frequently landed at an airstrip close to the town of Luzamba.

Another theory suggested a link with the diamond trade.

Many of the diamonds produced in Angola's remote Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul regions are smuggled out via Zaire and large numbers of Zaireans regularly travel to eastern Angola to dig for diamonds or buy them to sell.

For many years Zaire was accused of supporting Mr. Savimbi's UNITA rebels, who controlled much of the diamond area but have

since agreed a peace deal with the government in Luanda.

Many private airlines operate out of Zaire, with relatively few controls over safety and maintenance. In May 1994, Zaire's acting foreign minister and a Tunisian presidential aide were among nine people killed in a crash on the approach to Kinshasa's Ndjili Airport.

A Transport Ministry official said the plane used for Monday's charter flight was an Electra, based at Ndjili and owned by Trans Service Airlift, a private company.

Officials could not say what caused the crash but Thambwe Mwamba said an inquiry was under way. "I also have to speak to the owner of TSA, who is a Belgian. I hope we should know more in the next few days," he said.

Hospital staff said five survivors were flown to Kinshasa Tuesday and four were in intensive care in Ngaliema Clinic.

"They have been badly burned and their condition is serious. At this stage they are unable to talk," a doctor said.

A fifth survivor, the co-pilot, had been taken away by his family. Five corpses were also brought back from Angola.

Reference books suggest the largest Electra, a plane built by Lockheed, entered service worldwide in 1959 with an intended capacity of 99 passengers or 12 tonnes of cargo.

There have been a spate of plane crashes in the region recently. On Dec. 3 a Cameroon Airlines Boeing 737 crashed as it came into land at Cameroon's Douala Port, killing 72 people.

In Nigeria's latest accident last month, a Nigeria Airways Boeing 737 crashed on landing at Kaduna Airport in the north, killing nine people and injuring 44.

Before Monday's crash, the worst air disaster of 1995 involved a Russian Aeroflot TU-154 which disappeared on Dec. 7 with 97 people on board. The wreckage was found Monday inland from the Tatar Strait.

Plane drops 1 km over Atlantic; 43 injured

MADRID (R) — Forty-three passengers on a Venezuelan airliner were taken to hospital with broken bones or shock in the Canary Islands Tuesday after their plane plunged 1,000 metres (3,000 feet) in turbulence over the Atlantic.

"Everything was an inferno," Italian Lorena Rizzo, 24, told reporters after the plane, on a flight from Caracas to Rome, landed in Las Palmas in the Canary Islands.

Las Palmas Airport spokesman Antonio Lopez Marrero told Reuters the number of injured was 43.

The Viasa (Venezolana De Aviacion) DC-10 airliner carrying 154 people flew into a clear-air zone around 2 a.m. (0200 GMT), according to passengers, and the plane nose-dived, sending passengers and luggage hurtling around the cabin.

"We were all quiet and suddenly, we entered an air vacuum, and that's all," said Italian Carmela Mulas, 66, in hospital with a crushed lumbar vertebra.

She said that after the drop the captain told passengers through the intercom that the plane had fallen 1,000 metres (3,000 feet) and added: "Thank God, we

are alive."

He then asked for permission to make an emergency landing at Las Palmas, two hours' flight away, so passengers with spinal injury, broken bones, cuts, bruises and shock could be treated.

A number of people refused to get back on the plane and it resumed its journey to Rome with 24 fewer people on board, airport spokesman Marrero told Reuters.

Spanish Television showed passengers being driven back to the airport in neck braces and arm slings. One was sitting in a wheelchair. Five people were kept in various hospitals on the Canary Islands.

Local media listed among the injuries a fractured pelvis, fractured ribs, broken vertebrae, a broken sternum and collar and jawbone fractures.

Viasa's Madrid offices promised a press release and said they could not confirm the size of the drop.

In August this year, more than three dozen passengers and crew on a Thai International flight to Hong Kong ended up in hospital when their plane went into two successive free falls after hitting heavy turbulence during a thunderstorm.

Recorder badly damaged on Russia crash plane

MOSCOW (R) — The flight recorder of an aircraft which crashed in Russia's Far East with 97 people on board is so badly damaged its data cannot for the moment be deciphered. ITAR-TASS news agency reported Wednesday.

TASS quoted Rudolf Teimurazov, head of a commission investigating the crash of the TU-154 plane, as saying that tape from the recorder examined in the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk was broken into many small pieces.

"To be certain, the commission decided to send the recorder to Moscow for deciphering," it said.

Russian Television showed pictures of the crash site Tuesday, with pieces of the aircraft strewn about a crater blasted out of scrubland and clothing hanging from trees.

Search teams had been scouring a wide area in Russia's Far East after the plane, operated by Khabarovsk Airlines, went missing on Dec. 6 on a flight to Khabarovsk from the offshore island of Sakhalin.

Bad weather had prevented search teams approaching the heavily wooded, snow-covered area where the aircraft was eventually found.

Rescuers said the biggest pieces of wreckage were no longer than 80 cm (30 inches). Identifying the victims would probably prove impossible.

White House reaches deal with Whitewater counsel

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House said Tuesday night it had reached an agreement with special Whitewater Counsel Kenneth Starr on releasing notes sought by Congress and urged Republican leaders to accept the terms.

Mark Fabiani, special associate counsel to President Bill Clinton, said

Mr. Starr agreed that release of notes by former White House associate counsel William Kennedy will not be used to claim Mr. Clinton waived his attorney-client privilege.

The White House has said it wanted both Mr. Starr's office, which is conducting an independent probe of the Whitewater affair, and the

Senate and House committees investigating Whitewater to agree that release of the notes would not set a legal precedent for obtaining other documents.

"The situation is now clear," Mr. Fabiani said. "The White House wants to release the notes. The independent counsel has reached an agreement with

the White House. The power to make these notes public is now in the hands of Republicans."

The White House has refused to turn over the notes to committees of the House and Senate until they acknowledge it will not affect attorney-client privilege.

Timbers in warehouse may be from Nelson's Victory

LONDON (R) — Timbers left undisturbed for 200 years in a naval warehouse may have come from one of Britain's most famous warships, Admiral Horatio Nelson's HMS Victory. "It is a stunning find. The beams and planks could be part of HMS Victory," Brian Lavery of the National Maritime Museum told the Sunday Times. The 150 beams and 300 planks were found during excavations of an ancient warehouse at Chatham Dockyard in southern England. Once reassembled, they could help form a recreation of the hull and interior of HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship for his defeat of France's Napoleon Bonaparte at the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar. The beams were found covered in grime under layers of floorboards. The names of sailors were engraved in them along with ornamental carvings. Thousands of visitors every year tour HMS Victory in the southern English port of Portsmouth. But this is mainly a 19th century reconstruction of Nelson's ship that contains about 10 per cent of the original.

Nixon family condemns Stone's film portrayal

Nixon family condemns Stone's film portrayal

LOS ANGELES (R) — The family of former U.S. President Richard Nixon has denounced controversial director Oliver Stone's new film Nixon as "erroneous and malicious". Nixon's daughters Tricia Nixon Cox and Julie Nixon Eisenhower accused Stone of "character assassination". They said Stone, known for hit films such as "Wall Street", "Platoon" and "JFK", waited until Nixon and his wife Pat had died before making the film "expressly to prevent asserting their rights under the law". Nixon is portrayed by actor Anthony Hopkins as an insecure, pill-popping politician haunted by the deaths of his brothers.

Vandalised Miro painting restored in Brazil

BRASILIA (R) — Restorers had to repair a million-dollar painting by Spanish artist Joan Miro after it was vandalised at an exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, the show's sponsor said. Two restorers removed a handprint of black plastic glue a vandal slapped on Miro's Women In The Street, said Claudio Vasconcelos, director of Banco Do Brasil's Cultural Centre. "It's completely finished. There is no sign of any damage at all," he said. The handprint was discovered when the show closed. The painting by Miro features two black handprints and is valued at \$1 million.

Romania offers Gypsy as 'foreign' language

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania, home to one of the largest populations of Gypsies in Europe, is to offer courses to study gypsy as a foreign language. Gypsy would be taught alongside Sanskrit and Hindi as part of a three-year course at Bucharest University. Evenimentul Zilei newspaper reported. Gypsy is assumed to be an original language linked to Gypsy roots in the sub-continent. Ethnic Romanians have an uneasy relationship with the Gypsy community, officially estimated at 400,000. Gypsies were bought and sold as slaves up to the 1850s.

Gunman kills 5 at Bronx shoe store

NEW YORK (R) — In the second mass murder in New York City in 11 days, a man apparently upset with service in a shoe store opened fire Tuesday, killing five people before being wounded and captured by police.

Police said the 22-year-old gunman entered the Korean-owned Little Chester's Shoes store near the Bronx Zoo just before noon (1700 GMT) and opened fire within minutes.

The gunman tried to use one of the victims as cover to leave the store but was shot and caught by police who chased him through a winter snowstorm. He was being treated at a hospital in critical condition.

He was identified by police as Michael Vernon of the Bronx.

Initial reports indicated that the shooting was a robbery attempt but New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton later said

the man was apparently unhappy with the treatment he received inside the store.

The official death toll was also revised to five from the six deaths reported earlier. Four people died in a hail of bullets inside the store, among them a 12-year-old boy, officials said. They said the owner's wife, Kyong Bae, later died of her wounds in the hospital.

Officials had earlier said two people had died in the hospital, but it was revised because one of those wounded was still on a life support system.

Two other bystanders were being treated for bullet wounds.

Mr. Giuliani, whose administration was stunned by an apparently racist attack in Harlem on Dec. 8 that took the lives of eight people, told reporters the store owner was at the back of the building and unharmed.

Gunmen add to grim toll in South African Zulu heartland

DURBAN, South Africa (R) — Gunmen have killed nine more people in South Africa's volatile Zulu heartland, adding to a grim toll of more than 13,000 victims of political bloodshed in the province in the past decade.

Police said Wednesday the victims of Tuesday night's attacks on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, four of them children who were burned to death, were members of families which supported President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC).

The Mvushini area, where the killings took place, was a flashpoint of political fighting, but unrest subsided several months ago following peace talks between the ANC and its main political rivals in the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Police spokesman Superintendent Bala Naidoo said the attacks were linked to long-running turf wars between ANC supporters and those of Inkatha, which holds political power in the province.

Last week gunmen killed 10 people, including a baby, in two separate attacks on families which supported Inkatha.

"The motive (in

Tuesday's attacks) appears to be political because these people were ANC followers and this attack is linked to (the) Inkatha and ANC conflict in this area which has been going on for a long time," local police spokesman Superintendent Herman Fourie told Reuters.

Mr. Fourie said the gunmen first attacked the home of an 80-year-old woman. She was shot dead.

The attackers then went to the Ngqoko Kraal about a kilometre away and set one of the five huts on fire. A woman was shot dead and the rest of those inside, four of them children, appeared to have been burned to death.

Both the ANC and Inkatha condemned the killings and said the attacks were the work of those who opposed peace.

"The indications are the attackers were from the IFP," said south coast ANC official Ravi Pillay. But he added the attackers could also have been third party provocateurs.

Inkatha Member of Parliament Velaphi Ndlovu told Reuters he believed there was a group fanning violence in the area.

"It seems people are being

deployed to the area to kill IFP and ANC supporters and to brew political conflict," he said. Mr. Ndlovu was unable to say who he believed committed the killings.

Mandela and Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said last week they would launch a new initiative to end political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, heartland of South Africa's nine million Zulus.

"Violence in this province is of such a magnitude that it is a matter of concern to (Buthelezi) and myself," Mr. Mandela told reporters after meeting Mr. Buthelezi and about 30 other Zulu tribal chiefs in Durban.

At least 13,000 people were killed in political violence between ANC and Inkatha supporters in the volatile province during the decade leading up to the April 1994 democracy elections, but since then political unrest has largely slumped.

The independent watchdog Human Rights Committee (HRC) recorded its lowest monthly provincial death toll from political violence in several years in November with 37 killings.

U.S. defence bill clears Congress despite veto warning

WASHINGTON (R) — The Senate approved and sent to President Bill Clinton Tuesday a \$275 billion defence bill the White House said he would veto because it orders a U.S. anti-missile defence that could wreck treaties cutting nuclear weapons.

The Senate gave the bill Congress's final approval by a vote of 51-43.

The bill, carrying out a Republican "Contract With America" campaign pledge, orders development of an anti-missile system by 2003 to defend the United States against limited missile attacks by small countries.

Several Republicans said Mr. Clinton does not want to defend America against the threat. They also said Mr. Clinton's veto will undercut U.S. troops in Bosnia by holding back a pay raise and cost-of-living adjustments in the bill.

"How is the president going to explain this?" Senator Bob Smith, a New Hampshire Republican, said of the pay raise veto. "Another reason he uses ... is that he does not want to protect the United States of America from missile attacks."

But the White House said in a policy statement that the pay raise and benefits should be put in another bill.

It said the anti-missile defence would waste tens of billions of dollars because U.S. intelligence agencies see no such missile threat for at least a decade.

It also said the bill's order would jeopardise Russia's implementation of treaties cutting cold war nuclear arsenals by two-thirds. Russia might turn against the START-I and START-II strategic arms reduction treaties because the bill would likely require more than the one U.S. anti-missile missile site the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty permits.

"It would be foolish of us to trash a treaty with the Russians that allows them to reduce 4,000 weapons that could threaten this country so directly," Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, told the Senate.

Senator Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat and former Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, said the bill would not specifically violate the ABM treaty but the Russian parliament might consider it "an anticipatory breach" because more than one U.S. missile site would be needed.

The \$275 billion defence authorisation bill is \$7 billion more than Mr. Clinton requested and would authorise ships, planes and other weapons he does not want. But Mr. Clinton has already signed into law a companion bill appropriating the extra \$7 billion for defence because he will need at least \$2 billion of it to pay for the 20,000 U.S. peacekeepers in Bosnia.

The authorisation bill would also repeal Congress's 1993 mandate that no more than 20 B-2 Stealth bombers ever be built — for \$44 billion, or \$2.2 billion each — although the bill does not authorise any more at this time. Supporters hope Congress will eventually approve up to 40 of the bombers.

The bill also prohibits abortions in U.S. military hospitals except in cases of rape or incest, or to save the life of the mother.

Sri Lankan troops destroy 2 Tamil Tiger rebel boats

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops destroyed two boats carrying Tamil Tiger rebels off the northern Jaffna peninsula, the military said Wednesday.

"Two rebel boats were completely destroyed while others escaped with damages," the operational headquarters of the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

The navy took on six rebel boats at sea north of Pooneryn as they approached Jaffna Tuesday afternoon, it said.

The rebels, fighting for a homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east of majority Sinhalese Sri Lanka, were ousted from their Jaffna town stronghold 15 days ago by the army in its biggest offensive of a 12-year ethnic war.

The military says guerril-

las of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are regrouping in the Vanni area south of Jaffna lagoon and in the east.

Fleeing rebels have littered Jaffna with mines, which has made it difficult for the government to get the town ready for people to return.

An estimated 200,000 Tamils have fled the Jaffna peninsula since the latest fighting began in October and they are now caught in a tug of war between the government, which wants them to go home, and the LTTE, which wants them to stay put.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed since the LTTE launched its campaign in 1983.

Military and civilian

sources said earlier on Wednesday the tamil tigers were regrouping their fighting units in the east.

At least 500 well-trained guerrillas were holed up at two camps in eastern Vakarai and Verugal, south of Trincomalee Port, military sources told Reuters.

A two-storey building near the Vakarai camp, equipped with satellite dish and communications antennae and reported to be the office of LTTE's eastern leader Karikalan, had suddenly sprung into action, they said.

"There is a lot of activity being reported from the area," a military source said.

Military sources said the rebels were expected to step up activity in the east following the army's capture

of Jaffna.

"They will certainly aim to dominate the east at this stage," one source said.

Civilian sources said eight LTTE personnel described as "top-rungers" had arrived in the east by boat. The LTTE's "Sea Tiger" wing was also believed to have shifted a lot of hardware to a base at Verugal.

"Unusually high level of activity is seen and heard from the sea at night these days," a civilian source said.

The rebels already control vast stretches of land in the east with the exception of the two major towns, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, which are under army control.

Worldwide terrorism likely to surge — CIA chief

WASHINGTON (R) — CIA Director John Deutch Tuesday predicted a worldwide surge in terrorism and said he would redouble U.S. efforts to pierce hostile groups and governments abroad.

"I regret that I have come to the conclusion there is going to be tremendous growth in terrorism over the next decade or so, not only directed towards Americans but throughout the world," Mr. Deutch told the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee.

He named Hamas and Hizbollah as examples of perpetrators and said ethnic and religious strife would continue to cause instability and serve as a growing cause of terrorism.

Hamas is a hardline Palestinian group opposed to any peace with Israel. Hizbollah, or Party of God, is a pro-Iranian fundamentalist group seeking an Islamic republic in Lebanon as part of a broader movement in the region.

Mr. Deutch, in reply to a question at the hearing, said the predicted rise in terrorism would have "immense impact on how we conduct our foreign policy, immense impact on how American businesses operate abroad."

He said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other U.S. intelligence agencies were "shifting resources" to cope but that this hinged on recruiting foreign agents and waiting while they developed access.

In his opening statement, Mr. Deutch stoutly defended the CIA's covert operations arm, derided recently for failing, among other botched jobs, to find a Moscow spy in its midst for nine years, getting caught trying, to steal trade secrets, in Paris and

keeping a Guatemalan colonel on its payroll after he was implicated in the murder of a U.S. citizen.

It took years to put spies in place with access to leadership thinking in authoritarian countries and it was too late to recruit agents "when the crises come," he said. "I believe it is time to stop criticism of the past few years and to encourage this vital activity," he told committee Chairman Larry Combest, a Texas Republican. "I intend to do so."

Outlining perceived threats to the United States over the next 10 to 15 years, Mr. Deutch told the panel: "It is my judgement that ideologies and regimes inimical to democracy will continue to exist. Examples today are Iran, Iraq and North Korea."

He later referred to Libya as another "rogue" in connection with trade in chemical

and biological arms.

As other examples of threats, he cited unspecified transnational groups involved in drug running, organised crime and terrorism, which he said were often linked as problems.

He told the panel, one of several mulling a possible spy community overhaul, that the director of central intelligence should have expanded jurisdiction over all aspects of the estimated \$28 billion-a-year intelligence budget and spy agencies currently supervised by the defence secretary and other executive agency chiefs.

Mr. Deutch said this was a time of transition similar to the period after the World War II and fine-tuning the U.S. spy apparatus would lead to better decision-making that would protect U.S. interests "and save American lives."

Walesa: Poland faces 'security threat'

WARSAW (R) — Polish President Lech Walesa, due to hand over power to an ex-Communist rival this week, has said he holds documents revealing a serious "threat to state security" but kept Poland guessing what it was Wednesday.

Private Radio Zet reported unnamed sources as saying the documents allegedly showed the leftist Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy had contacts with Soviet and Russian intelligence from 1983 until he took office early this year.

Public radio's channel three later quoted a senior military prosecutor as saying the documents concerned spying allegations against an unnamed top state official.

Western diplomats said they involved Mr. Oleksy.

Mr. Walesa, who led the Solidarity union to its triumph over Communist rule in 1989 but lost power in elections last month, unveiled the documents at a sudden late Tuesday meeting in his Warsaw palace with both speakers of parliament and the heads of Poland's Supreme and Constitutional Courts.

"In President Lech Walesa's presence, Interior Minister Andrzej Milczanowski presented materials which have formed the basis for submitting a motion to the supreme military prosecutor...on taking preliminary actions in a case of a threat to state security," his office said in a statement.

It gave no details. Aides of Mr. Walesa, who says Poland could fall into the grips of a "red spiderweb" with the installation of Mr. Oleksy's ally Aleksander Kwasniewski Saturday, were unavailable for comment. Mr. Kwasniewski defeated Mr. Walesa in the elections.

Government spokeswoman Aleksandra Jakubowska said she knew of the reports about damaging documents concerning

Mr. Oleksy only from the media, adding: "I think this is just another attempt to destabilise the situation in Poland."

She said Mr. Oleksy was asking Mr. Walesa to summon an immediate meeting of the National Defence Committee (KOK), which includes the president, prime minister, parliament speakers, top cabinet members and the head of the army, to thrash the matter out.

Polish newspapers demanded Wednesday that the full facts be revealed quickly and the matter settled to avoid damage to national stability just before the handover of power.

"Although grave rumours are flying around Warsaw, the situation is completely unclear. Nobody knows anything concrete," best-selling Gazeta Wyborcza's editor Adam Michnik wrote in a front-page commentary.

"Three days before the president-elect's swearing-in, public opinion has the right to expect that the stability of the state will not be harmed," he added.

Mr. Walesa argues that with ex-Communists controlling the presidency, government and parliament there will be no effective checks on their power.

About half a million of his supporters last month submitted petitions to the Supreme Court applying for Mr. Kwasniewski's election victory to be annulled on grounds that he had falsely claimed to have a university degree.

The court on Dec. 9 upheld the elections but it ruled that Mr. Kwasniewski had misled voters by claiming a higher education when he had not in fact graduated.

Mr. Walesa has not taken his election defeat lying down. His latest move appeared to be an early attempt to strike back at the resurgent ex-Communists turned Social Democrats.

At talks with opposition party leaders last week Mr.

Walesa said he had important secret information about the international links of what he termed Poland's post-Communist oligarchy and might reveal it before leaving office.

The Zycie Warszawy newspaper said that for the sake of Mr. Walesa's reputation, the allegations had better be solid and not just a further, post-vote round of the elections.

But it added that if in fact there was a case of treason, Poland would have to ask itself whether it had really won independence "from Moscow's domination in 1989."

Mr. Milczanowski, a former Solidarity activist who as interior minister is in charge of the police and security services, is a Walesa ally and is due to quit along with him this week.

Mr. Walesa has refused to attend Mr. Kwasniewski's swearing-in ceremony Saturday and has vowed to rally the opposition so it can win the next parliamentary elections, due in 1997.

Pressure on Mr. Kwasniewski has also come from Warsaw prosecutors, who applied Tuesday for his immunity as a parliamentary deputy to be lifted so it could probe his failure to declare to parliament his wife's investments.

Mr. Oleksy, tersely commenting on Mr. Walesa's sudden announcement of the threat to state security, said Wednesday it was a "dirty provocation."

"What has been done demonstrates that state security may be threatened, but by those who cannot leave their posts in a dignified fashion," Mr. Oleksy told reporters.

Mr. Oleksy spoke after talks in parliament with Speaker Jozef Zych.

"I presented the speaker with my opinion of this dirty provocation," Mr. Oleksy said, but refused further comment.

South Korea's former president Chun to be charged with mutiny

SEOUL (R) — South Korean former President Chun Doo Hwan, who is currently being detained by authorities, will be formally charged Thursday with mutiny stemming from a 1979 military coup, a prosecution official said Wednesday.

"It has been decided to indict him tomorrow," said the official. The deadline for Mr. Chun's indictment is Friday.

News reports said former President Roh Tae-Woo would also be indicted together with Mr. Chun, but

the official said he could not confirm this. "I'm not sure about that," he told Reuters.

Mr. Chun's successor Mr. Roh is also being detained on unrelated charges of bribery. The former president is charged with accepting \$369 million in kickbacks from 35 business tycoons during his 1988-93 term in office.

News reports said Mr. Chun, who was arrested and detained on Dec. 3, might be taken to a hospital this week since his health had deteriorated from an 18-day hunger strike.

The state radio said an ambulance was waiting on 24-hour standby at the Anyang Prison.

"We are carrying out medical checks two times a day, and just in case, we have an ambulance on 24-hour standby," the radio quoted a police official as saying.

The Munhwa Ilbo quoted a police official as saying the police hospital was preparing for Mr. Chun's arrival. An official at the hospital said he could not confirm the report.

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From Russia with realism

THE GOOD showing by the Communists and the ultranationalists in this week's Russian elections show that the country is polarised right down the middle. With the communists poised to win about quarter of the state Duma seats and the ultranationalists about 12 per cent, Russian President Boris Yeltsin may have to reckon with the new realities on the Russian political landscape even though he has been sending one signal after the other that the results of the election would not affect his course. The Russian leader had warned his people not to forget the dismal conditions under communism. But despite that warning, the Russian electorate has chosen to take stock of the difficult conditions of today rather look back at the errors of the previous era.

With life in Russia reduced to anarchy on every level, where organised crime seems to have the upper hand in the country and prices of commodities rocketing to all time highs, nothing is seen as terrible as the current situation. With presidential elections due to be held in 1996, Mr. Yeltsin may have to yield to other forces than to those of his own which have made a very poor showing in the elections.

The Russian leader, however, is known to reject results of democratic elections if they differ from his own. His decision to bomb the Duma to smithereens a couple of years ago because it dared oppose his policies is a grim reminder of the extent to which the Russian President may go to frustrate the opposition even when they appear to command effective control over the Russian parliament. Yet the embryonic Russian democracy has a vested interest in succeeding even when there is a tendency to go back to the "good old days." It must be pointed out that even the Communists have learned from their mistakes and appear to have transformed into something that is clearly distinguishable from their profile during the rigid communist rule. As long as there is pluralism in Russia, there can be no danger from the Communists controlling one fourth of the Duma.

The Russian elections have been fair, according to international observers, and this has prompted many Western nations to congratulate Moscow on the way it has conducted these elections. President Yeltsin would thus show a high degree of statesmanship if he accepts the outcome of the elections and acts in accordance with the wishes of his people.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily Wednesday demanded that the government adopt a firm population policy aimed at curtailing the high rate of population growth. The greater the number of the population, the weaker the nation because, said Fahd Al Fanek, who added that the stronger nations are those with the lower rate of population growth. Referring to the population in Jordan, the writer said that the increase has caused imbalances between population and resources. Between 1982 and 1992, the Jordanians' standard of living continued to take a downward trend, and between 1992 and 1995 no improvement occurred despite the economic growth, with the result that the living standard now are far below those of 15 years ago, according to the writer. He said Jordan has to take a lesson from Egypt, which has a population of 60 million, several millions of them live in cemeteries and live off garbage dumps. The writer said the population explosion in the Third World constitutes a danger not to Europe or America, but rather to the Third World countries.

A WRITER in Al Dustour said that people are fed up with statements by government officials about the government's intention to fight corruption. We have been hearing such statements for years, but saw no practical step taken to put matters right and punish the corrupt, said Mohammad Daoud. The task of fighting corruption has not ended with the organisation of two seminars on corruption, although seminars help the government and other concerned parties to focus attention on ways to deal with administrative or financial excesses and violations, said the writer. The government is called on to take up speedy measures at the legislative and executive authorities' levels to bit hard on those who mismanage public fund, or abuse their official position or accept bribes, said the writer. It is enough for the government to take one drastic measure in this direction to deter officials, employees and people working in various sectors from committing any violation, he continued. Not only should the government be brave enough to embark on strict measures against corrupt people but he said, it should also resist pressure from any party or clan or influential personalities to retreat from its course of action.

The View from Academia

Time to make peace with the U.S.

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubch

WITH THE speedy Israeli handover of major West Bank towns and cities to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), peace between the Palestinians and Israel is finally gaining the momentum we have been awaiting for some time. The sceptics, rejectionists and "enemies of peace," who until recently have been boring us with their false but forceful motto "Gaza-Jericho first and last," are eating their hearts out and are desperately looking for oew, and equally fallacious, mottoes to cling onto and to bore us with. With Jenin, Nablus and Qalqilia already under Palestinian control (Bethlehem, Ramallah and other cities will follow suit soon), and with the Syrian-Israeli track receiving the increased attention it has lacked, peace in the whole Middle East region is emerging as a reality.

Another kind of peace, however, needs also to be made — namely, between the Arab World and the U.S. What do you mean? Isn't the vast majority of the Arab World on good terms with the U.S.? Well, yes and no. Yes because many Arab countries do have warm diplomatic relations with the U.S., and no because some do not. Yes and no, also, because even in those countries which have warm relations with the U.S., there are institutions and individuals who hold immensely negative and, at times, acutely hostile views towards the U.S. It is this latter dimension of the relationship that I wish to focus on here.

Arab images of the U.S. are, we should emphasise, extremely complex; and so are their sentiments towards it. On the basis of what they see on TV, what they hear from friends and acquaintances who have been to the U.S., what they "see" in their brief encounter with tourists, what they are told by elders, teachers and preachers, and the little they read in the press and books, Arabs, like most citizens of today's world, hold diametrically opposed views of "America" as a culture. By "America," a misnomer to a degree, they mean the U.S. — not Canada, not Mexico and not South America. As a culture, America is at once attractive and repulsive, fascinating and disappointing, spectacular and ugly, elegant and vulgar, noble and savage, good and evil, highly sophisticated and developed and remarkably ruthless and primitive. Whatever truths or untruths there are in such images and sentiments, we Arabs (individuals and institutions alike) are as much to thank or blame as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Michael Jackson, O.J. Simpson, Madonna, Hulk Hogan, and others.

Politically, the picture is a lot simpler. To many among us, America is not a "friend," a good "ally" or a "partner" in peace, as the U.S. wishes to see itself and as some of us would like to think. No. America today is still viewed as a manipulator, user, abuser and in fact "real" enemy of the Arab World. It comes to us with much sweet talk behind which lie toooes of fishy schemes, ill-intentions and co-spiracies. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing. America wants our oil, our soil, and our soul; wants us solely as a market for its goods; wants to brainwash us, to Americanise us and wipe our culture out of existence. America is the enemy of our very Arabism, of our Arab nationalism and of Islam. Does not it call us the "Middle East and North Africa" instead of the Arab World? Isn't America the blindly loyal friend, benefactor, lover, nurse and mother of Israel? Does not its interest in the Middle East stem largely from the desire to help Israel dominate the Arab World politically, economically and culturally? Are not imperialism and Zionism the twin monsters whose sole aim is to make sheesh kebab out of us and eat us ravenously?

A couple of weeks ago, I read in our press a statement, starting in its absurdity, by a prominent Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) political figure in which he argues that the U.S. administration, opposite to what one may conclude, is neither sincere nor serious about bringing peace to the Palestinians and that it (the U.S. administration) is encouraging the U.S. Congress to adopt hostile measures against the PLO and Palestinians. I shall spare the reader quotations from our press, pamphlets, books and daily conversations which are too silly and nonsensical to be taken seriously, even though they are appealing to many and influential in their own way. The title of a booklet which was widely circulated a few years ago reads: America Says, Destroy Islam and Eliminate its People; you

can imagine what the content is like. Suffice it to say that the references to "America" in the articles of many of our daily and weekly columnists and writers are still as superficial, sweeping, unintelligent, reductive, unexciting and ultimately unhelpful as they were 30 years ago. It is as if Egypt had not restored its occupied land, as if Madrid had not happened, as if Oslo I and II had not taken place, as if Jordanian water and land had not been regained, as if Palestinian cities were not being handed over to Palestinians, as if the Amman economic summit (MENA) had not taken place; and as if the U.S. had not played a fundamental role in all of this. Suffice it also to say that it is still very difficult to have an intelligent discussion of America's role in the Middle East, not just at our professional unions and associations but in our informal get-togethers. Try to say, for instance, to a couple of friends — who have for 15 minutes been boring you with clichés and sweeping generalisations about America's viciousness and monstrosity — something like, "don't you guys think, though, that the U.S. administration is adopting a more active and constructive role in peace making at this point — relatively speaking, that is, if you know what I mean?" They glance at you with eyes that freeze you in your place as if you have said something so stupid, so blasphemous and so shameful. If you're not the "strong" and "loud" type, if you're polite and soft-spoken, you freeze and shut up.

To be sure, some of these truths, half-truths, extreme positions, exaggerated images, misconceptions, delusions, hallucinations are a direct and indirect result of U.S. statements, policies and acts over the past half century: The 1967 war, the U.S. vetoes of Arab motions at the U.N., the games (justifiable but also foolish and dangerous) the Congress has played and is playing (i.e. the recent Dole motion regarding Jerusalem), the military treaties with Israel, the huge amounts of aid to Israel, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, etc. People do not forget easily. What the U.S. did at times, no matter what the motives or the justifications, is unforgivable. And some may be attributed to some among us who view matters from their own narrow angles, as if Nasserism had not failed miserably (attractive though it may have seemed or still does) and as if Communism had not collapsed entirely. But some may also be attributed, and we should be courageous enough and objective enough to admit that, to our own insecurity, feeling of weakness and smallness, failure, paranoia, sadism, masochism, ignorance in understanding the U.S. inability to comprehend the full implications of what is and has been happening for some time, oavete, ignorance and simple-mindedness.

Let me tell you the following anecdote to illustrate how shortsighted, imprecise, unconvincing and off-target we ourselves can be to perceiving and responding to U.S. measures and policies. Upon the end of his term in office, U.S. former president Jimmy Carter, who had been instrumental in concluding the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel, paid a visit to the West Bank. A group of Palestinian boys were busy throwing stones at his humble motorcade. A journalist approached one of the kids and asked him why he was throwing stones at Mr. Carter. The boy responded "because he is the leader of imperialism in the world." For years, I was vexed and angry at the boy's response. Of course, he is not much to blame, and the words are not his; he must have heard them from his father, elder brother, neighbour, teacher, preacher, politician; and most probably he did not even know what imperialism meant. Do you mean to tell me that in those dark, dreary days the most urgent priority for Palestinians under Israeli occupation was "world imperialism"? Do you mean to tell me that they threw stones at Mr. Carter because he was the "leader of imperialism in the world"? Merry Christmas, imperialism. Should not he have said, rather, something like: "We throw stones at him because the Camp David accords fall extremely short of our expectations, because they do not recognise us as a people, because they should have been negotiated by us Palestinians or by our representatives." Something along these lines, something specific which we can understand, which the world can understand, and which perhaps Mr.

Carter himself can understand. Luckily, the children of the intifada, who knew better where to throw their stones and why, redeemed such miscalculation and ignorance and softened our anger and frustration.

The case I had against this Palestinian kid then I have against many in my society now. When most people in our part of the world speak about America, they are as off-target as that Palestinian kid. They simply do not know where to throw their stones and why. Why get us into unfruitful, unhelpful and irrelevant battles at a time when we have specific demands to make and cases to argue. Much of the criticism I hear about America today is imprecise, unspecific and therefore false. If a writer, a journalist or a friend writes, supporting his argument with facts and figures, to show that a certain percentage of U.S. aid to Israel is channelled or rechannelled to build this or that illegal settlement in Israel and that this is both wrong and in violation of U.S. pledges and commitments, this is an intelligent, helpful and fair criticism of U.S. aid to Israel. But if the same person writes an article in which he lumps one metaphor after another about how the U.S. is the "lover," "nurse," or "mother" of Israel, as many nowadays still do, I believe this to be imprecise, unintelligent and unhelpful. Similarly, if an economist writes to show that at the MENA summit the U.S. signed an agreement to establish four sophisticated factories with Israel and none with Jordan and to show in facts and figures how this is unwise, what he writes is intelligent and fair. But if he writes an article to tell me that the Amman economic summit is nothing but an excuse for the U.S. to bring Israel into the Arab World, this is neither fair nor intelligent.

Which brings me to the two points I wish to underscore by way of suggesting how our conception of and discourse about the relation with the U.S. can be helpful.

One is not against criticism of the U.S. It is our business as writers, journalists, scholars and housewives to do so. But we want the criticism to be fair, perceptive, precise, intelligent and helpful. We want facts, figures, statistics, reasonable analysis, profound diagnosis. We also need someone who cites the positive and the negative. The attention America is giving to peace in the Middle East at this point is more dynamic and fair than it has been for years. That we must admit and voice, for just as we criticise negative measures and steps, we should encourage positive gestures and moves. If we have any reservations or criticisms of U.S. policies, let's voice them intelligently. Perhaps what we need more than anything else are expert journalists, writers and scholars of U.S.-Arab relations. One is sick and tired of old wives tales. I wonder also why one of our public universities was enthusiastic about housing the American Studies Centre, a centre which we directly need (as much as the U.S. does) and which only private universities have expressed an interest in housing?

Second: let's have confidence in ourselves. Frankly speaking, we look so pathetic and erroneous when we keep portraying ourselves as victims and America as a victimiser. We look much like a battered wife who receives the blows passively (and enjoys them, in a perverse way) and is not doing anything, beyond railing and wailing, to confront her situation. Just as no woman is too weak to stand up to any vicious man, we are not so weak as not to assert ourselves positively and to have a fruitful relationship with America. Let's view matters as they ought to be viewed: America is a country whose first and foremost priority is to look after its own interests and is doing its best to achieve such goal. I do not see anything wrong with this, especially since I know for a fact that America is smart and sophisticated enough to realise that its interests cannot be realised without a degree of respect of the interests of others. Isn't this what politics is all about? Does not it ultimately boil down to the basic human premise: if you wash my hand, I wash yours. That should be our motto in dealing with the U.S., which is neither an enemy nor a lover but an important country and a reality with which we ought to deal intelligently and correctly.

It is time to make peace with the U.S. and to embark on a more fruitful relationship with it.

Duma vote clears way for Russian presidency battle

The communists' handicap will be that while aiming to capture the presidency, they are also committed to scrapping it and restoring a Soviet-style system

By John Morrison

REUTERS
MOSCOW — With the results still trickling in from Sunday's parliamentary election, Russian politicians are already preparing for a bigger and more important campaign — the choice of a president next June.

Under President Boris Yeltsin's 1993 constitution it is the head of state who wields most of the power, not parliament. Even those who would like the post abolished, such as the communists, know the presidency controls the levers in Russia.

Sunday's State Duma

(lower house) elections, which saw the revived Communist Party taking a fifth of the vote, is likely to propel its leader Gennady Zyuganov into joining the list of potential presidential candidates.

Mr. Yeltsin himself will only say in February, when he will turn 65, whether he will run for a second term. Members of his team say the communist advance in the Duma could make it more likely.

But the biggest question-mark is not over whether Mr. Yeltsin wants to run, but whether his health will allow it after two heart attacks in July and Octo-

ber.

Although Mr. Yeltsin appeared on Sunday to be recovered from his second bout of heart trouble, his capacity to withstand the stress and pace of long campaign across 11 times zones has to be in question.

Even if Mr. Yeltsin can overcome health problems, he faces an uphill battle to recover his standing with voters. He has no hope of repeating his 1991 first round victory of more than 57 per cent of the vote, 40 points ahead of his nearest challenger.

Next year's first round on June 16 is certain to be followed by a runoff two

weeks later between the top two candidates in what looks like a crowded field. Although many Russians believe the poll will be cancelled altogether, there is no evidence this is likely.

Mr. Yeltsin's war in Chechnya has severely damaged his standing with liberal reformers who used to form the bedrock of his support, while falling living standards have eroded his wider appeal. Some polls put his support at less than 10 per cent.

Many believe Mr. Yeltsin's strategy will be to present himself as the only bulwark against a return to communism. But voters on

Sunday appeared to ignore his appeal along these lines.

One rival to Mr. Yeltsin is certain to stand is Grigory Yavlinsky, whose Yabloko Party looks set to return to the Duma. An economist, he is a liberal opponent of Mr. Yeltsin who could draw many of his former supporters.

Unlike other reformers, Mr. Yavlinsky has been out of power since 1990 and bears no responsibility for Russia's economic woes. He said on Monday that Mr. Yeltsin's economic policies were paving the way for a communist victory in the presidential vote.

Among the opposition, ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is also certain to run. He came third in the 1991 race with nearly eight per cent, has the advantage of widespread voter recognition and unrivalled campaigning skills, but would have little chance against almost any other contender in a runoff.

Communist leader Zyuganov, a colourless and charisma-free former ideologist, has little appeal outside his traditional electorate, but after Sunday's results looks more likely to run.

The communists' handicap will be that while aiming to capture the presidency, they are also committed to scrapping it and restor-

ing a Soviet-style system under which the head of state and the government would be subordinate to parliament.

This commitment would make it difficult for the party to throw its weight behind a non-communist candidate for the presidency such as retired General Alexander Lebed.

Sunday's results left Mr. Lebed looking a much less credible candidate for the top job. While he won a parliamentary seat in Tula, the Congress of Russian Communities list which boasted him as its main attraction appears to have failed to enter the Duma.

The man favoured by Russia's neighbours in east and west is Mr. Yeltsin does not or cannot run is Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. But Russians may not share this view.

The premier has said he will not run against Mr. Yeltsin and his appeal to voters must be in doubt after his Our Home is Russia list limped home in third place in Sunday's poll, behind the communists and Mr. Zhirinovskiy.

Should Mr. Yeltsin fall out of the race, Mr. Chernomyrdin might face a challenge from establishment rivals such as Vladimir Shumeiko, outgoing chairman of the federation council upper house, who could win the support of powerful regional leaders.

LETTERS

Setting our priorities straight

To the Editor:

IT WAS interesting for me to read about Mr. Jeff Getty, an AIDS activist who has been fighting for the introduction of potential AIDS treatments and cures so as to save millions of people's lives, including his own. "Man who received baboon marrow cells is doing well," (Jordan Times Dec. 17).

Mr. Getty has become the first AIDS patient to undergo a baboon-to-human transplant of bone marrow cells. He is in good condition and doctors say he is doing great. The bone marrow transplant was done in the hope that the baboon's natural resistance to the AIDS virus would save the lives of AIDS patients all over.

What overwhelms me with surprise is the attitude taken by animal rights activists who have been angered by, and oppose to the actions of using animal tissue to save human lives. I am a person who while growing up, have always had

house pets around, and at present enjoy the company of two cats that I have much affection for.

But I also have two wonderful, beautiful children whom I love and would give my life for. God forbid if any life threatening illness should afflict them as in the case of Mr. Getty, and my cat's bone marrow tissue might be the only substance to save their lives. Would I sacrifice my cats for the lives of my children who just happen to be human beings? You bet I would. The animal rights activists should study this subject much deeper, weighing their decisions as to where their priorities lie, and what they would do in a similar situation. They are so concerned about the extinction of animals that they totally neglected to consider the extinction of humanity.

Robert T. Nazzari,
Amman.

Society on the Move

From Karbardino-Bulkaria to elusive Nablus: Crossroads to a Merry Christmas

Visiting Jordan for one-week is Raslan Mohammad Janimoff, the minister of information of Karbardino-Bulkaria, a republic of the Russian Federation. Here at the invitation of the Circassian Charity Association, headed by Samir Kardan, Mr. Janimoff visited with his Jordanian counterpart, Minister of Information Khaled Karaki, and other ministry officials. On his schedule of meetings, Mr. Janimoff was to visit with fellow Circassians Minister of Administrative Development Mohieddin Touq, Ibrahim Naghwaway at the Foreign Ministry, and Farouk Naghwaway at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. He was also to meet with President of AL al Bayt University Adnan Bakhit, and senior officials of the ministries of Social Development and Higher Education. Today, the minister was to visit the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation. As the republic is attached to the Russian Federation, the political exchange between individual republics and other nation states is somewhat limited, explains Ministry of Information Secretary General Nayef Mawla, also a Circassian. But Mr. Mawla said the ministry did offer the visiting official any help he might require in the field of information. Mr. Mawla last week returned from a three-day visit to Bahrain at the invitation of Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa to celebrate the anniversary of the state's national day, an occasion, he said, he was honoured to attend.

HERE FOR THE DURATION: Liu Baolai, the ambassador-designate of the People's Republic of China to Jordan, this past week presented a copy of his credentials to Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. Mr. Baolai is a career diplomat who served as ambassador to the United Arab Emirates before his appointment to Jordan. Born in 1941, Mr. Liu's diplomatic career began in 1970 first as attaché then third secretary at the Chinese embassy in Sudan until 1978. From 1978 to 1984 he was first, division vice chief, then division chief of the Department of West Asia and North Africa (DWANA) of the Foreign Ministry. In 1984 he was sent to Kuwait as first secretary, then became consul until 1989. He returned home in 1989 and soon after became vice director at the DWANA. Mr. Liu, who is married and has one son, was appointed ambassador to the UAE in 1991. He is a university graduate and fluent in Arabic and English. He succeeds Wang Shijie, who spent just over two years in Jordan and returned on Nov. 19 to his foreign ministry. Before he left Jordan, Mr. Wang was expected to head to another Islamic or Arab country as ambassador. But his friends here are still waiting to know the name of his final destination.

AND MORE PASHAS: Last month, coinciding with His Majesty King Hussein's 60th birthday, several senior army and intelligence officials, whom we should not name, were promoted to the rank of major general, according to the traditional and often coveted title of "Pasha." We will not name them here, because we will follow the unwritten rule, but many of their families and friends, apparently benefiting from the "opening up" that comes with peace and democracy, did place congratulatory advertisements in the local papers, some with photos as well. This week, from the senior ranks of the Public Security Department, three officers (and these we can name) were promoted to "Pasha." They are Major General Abdul Karim Tarawneh, Abdul Hamid Irsheid and Adel Armouti at a ceremony presided over by PSD Director General Abdul Rahman Adwan, and attended by Chief of the Badia Police and Gen. Adwan's deputy Sharif Fawwaz Zaben, and other senior police officials. Maj. Gen. Tarawneh is director of officer affairs; Maj. Gen. Irsheid is director of the Karak police; and Maj. Gen. Armouti is chief of police of Amman.

RIGHT TURN TO NABLUS: We have all heard variations on the whys and wherefores of the failed trip by 13 bus-loads of Jordanians bound for Nablus last week to celebrate the liberation of the West Bank town from Israeli rule. Most of those who attempted the journey were invited by the Municipality of Nablus. Men in their suits, women dressed to the nines (stilettos and all) and the Salti "shuykh" donning their finest abayahs converged at the Amra Hotel at 7:00 a.m. Friday, climbed into the buses and made a caravan toward the border crossing. On the Jordanian side, the red tape formalities were to be applauded. The authorities swiftly checked the list of names against the passengers on board each bus, allowing time for some to get off and enjoy a Diet Coke, and that was that. The hold up at the Israeli checkpoint on the King Hussein Bridge was annoying, at say the least. But theorising is a rampant trait. As the clock ticked nearer the time the celebrations were to kick off, would-be revellers began offering reasons for the delay. A senior member of parliament was said to send out the first word that Abu Amar (PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat) was deliberately blocking the Jordanian contingent from attending the festivities. Then at about 10:15, organiser of the trip former Prime Minister and Deputy Taher Masri was said to have telephoned Abu Amar, who said not to worry, he would make certain that the event would await the arrival of the Jordanians. At 10:30, someone must have shouted "Let the festivities begin!" for begin they did. It was time to give up and turn back. But the Salti sheikhs seized the moment, saying "They may keep us from celebrating in our town city of Nablus, but they cannot keep us from celebrating in Salti!" At which the sheikhs invited the entire party to their town. While deputies and the Saltis made the biggest showing, other figures, including many native Nablusis, donned their Friday best for a rather anti-climactic day. Among them were industrialist/historian/Salti native Raouf Abu Jaber and his wife Mirielle who said they made the trip because they have always been closely attached to the realisation of the aspiration of Palestinians to be freed from 28 years of occupation. Mrs. Abu Jaber



From "The Great Mosque and City Center" project in Riyadh, by architect Rassem Badran

HONOURING INNOVATION: This year, among the winners of the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture is Jordanian architect Rassem Badran. The award was founded in 1977 and is awarded on a triennial basis with the intention of exploring the direction of architectural projects in Muslim societies and encouraging a high standard of design. During the Master Jury's discussions of the 442 projects nominated for the 1995 award, three types of critical discourse came to shape the debate: critical social discourse, critical architectural and urbanistic discourse (the category under which Mr. Badran's project, completed in 1992, was selected) and another discourse about innovative concepts. Mr. Badran was retained by the Riyadh Development Authority to design the Great Mosque of Riyadh and the redevelopment of the Old City Centre. According to the Aga Khan Award judges, "Rassem Badran has defined the central core of Riyadh through a series of open spaces, including plazas, fountains, and courtyards, that connect the Great Mosque to its surroundings. His approach combines a reinterpretation of traditional Najdi architecture with an innovative yet unobtrusive use of modern materials and technologies. Badran and the ADA have succeeded in creating a modern urban complex while retaining the essence of its traditional frame." Her Majesty Queen Noor, herself a graduate of architecture and urban planning from Princeton University, wrote Mr. Badran to congratulate him on his award. In her letter, the Queen said: "We, in Jordan, are particularly proud of the fact that your project was selected out of 442 international nominations, all of which attempted to define the role of architecture in Muslim societies and developing countries. Your extensive experience in the field of architecture and urban planning has been and will continue to be an invaluable contribution to Jordan's modern architectural movement, where you have already attracted a substantial following and created your own school of thought. With my high esteem and best wishes for your continued success in all your endeavours."

is of Palestinian origin from Nazareth. Also among the group were former Foreign Minister and Deputy Abdullah Ensour (a Salti native) and his wife, former Minister of Education Eid Edhiyyat, former director general of Parliament Adnan Bayoum, Industrial Development Bank Director of Studies and Research Tayseer Wahbeh, architect Jafar Toukan, women's activists Hajja Bashir and Subhiya Maani, a dozen or so journalists, and chief editors. Only a few days following the foiled trip, a senior Palestinian leader was in Amman. Over lunch he quipped, "It was just a way of the Israelis retaliating for the tomatoes that were hurled at them during their re-deployment from Nablus."



FADIA FAQIR

REBEL WITH A CAUSE: No tomo-to-ting here. Over in Britain, a "favourite daughter" has been awarded the 1995 New Venture Award. The annual prize is presented by Women in Publishing to celebrate the achievements of women in the book world who have broken new ground and made significant contributions in the fields of publishing, book selling or related areas. This year's award was last week presented at Durham University professor and writer Fadia Faqir, editor of the Arab Women Writers series of Gomer Publishing, at a major awards ceremony and Christmas party. Upon accepting the prize, Dr. Faqir said: "The Arab Women Writers series was born during a dark moment of the soul. The allied forces were dropping bombs on Iraq and many innocent Arabs were being killed. The Gulf between us was expanding, and only a superhuman leap would have bridged it. Out of the nostalgia for

the destroyed villages, the palm trees and my mother's head scarf, I began the series. It is intended to humanise the Arabs and enlarge what is possible to think about them in the English-speaking world. My aim was to present Arab women's voices to you unmediated." Dr. Faqir, teaches Arabic and gender studies. She, herself, has published two novels, Nisanit and Pillars of Salt. On a more personal note, Dr. Faqir's life is one of perseverance and struggle. Born in Amman, her paternal roots are solidly linked to the Um Al Basateen tribe of the Ajlameh, a division of the larger Balqa tribe. Forced into marriage at a young age, she rebelled and won. She took up her studies again and completed her masters degree and a Ph.D. Dr. Faqir returns to Jordan almost annually to visit with family and friends, and last year she met with about 50 members of the young generation of her tribe (men and women) in Hisban to talk about her experiences. We were told the meeting went well, and expect it was an eye-opener for most of the young listeners. From home, we send our congratulations.

E FOR ELECTRIC: This week witnessed the opening of a four-day conference by the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineering (IEEE), inaugurated by HRH Crown Prince Hassan. The international institute's main objective is to promote science and technology in its particular fields of interest as indicated in its formal name. Although many Jordanians in this engineering profession are members in the IEEE, that is not, as some had presumed, the reason for hosting the annual event in Amman this year. According to Hnni Mulki, president of the host Jordanian institution, the Higher Council for Science and Technology, the convening of the conference in Jordan was actually at the request of the institute. But also, Dr. Mulki says, it gives Jordan yet another opportunity to shine. It gives the country a chance to show off its human resource capabilities in the electronic and electrical engineering arenas and its movement towards more utilisation of these fields in its industrial sector, particularly in the new television and computer assembly industries (Goldstar, Samsung). In addition, a significant number of the papers being presented to the conference are by Jordanians, both members and non-members of the IEEE. All this, says Dr. Mulki is a boost to Jordan, again placing it on yet another map of the world's disciplines.

SHOVE OVER: If the people at Petra, the national news agency, think they are working in conditions not close for comfort, pity the folks at Al Aswaq. When the Arabic daily purchased the ailing Al Shaab newspaper, it may not have been expecting to inherit all its staff, but inherit it did. Packed in its original offices in the Insurance Building at Third Circle the Al Aswaq staff is attempting another version of the strategy of divide and conquer. According to

Chief Editor Mustafa Abu Libdeh, the formation of the new shareholding company is moving at a tedious pace, so hoping to ease the pressure on work space, without interfering in the daily operations, the administration has decided to move itself and the advertising department to the former Al Shaab offices, leaving the computer and editorial staff to continue undisturbed until further notice. The approach may just lend a new meaning to squatters' rights.

GET A MILK MOUSTACHE: New dairy producers, the Arath Fresh Dairy Company (AFDC), have already moved into a new packaging line. Having only started production last March with traditional products such as yaghour, lebaneh, and haloumi, the company, whose trade name is Al Kuwaiter and completely unrelated to the mineral water suppliers, has now added fresh pasteurised milk. The twist is that along with the standard one litre container, AFDC is selling a new 1.9 litre, plastic container of fresh milk. According to factory manager Suber Midhat, the larger container is less expensive than purchasing 2 litres of milk now available on the market. An added attraction, say Mr. Midhat, is that the container is reusable for storing other liquids such as vegetable oil, water, etc. The milk itself is supplied by the dairy farms of the Jordan Economic and Social Organisation for Retired Servicemen (JESORS), which happens to be a major shareholder in the AFDC. Both the factory and the farms are in Al Khaldiya in Mafraq Governorate. Mr. Midhat says the company plans to produce long-life milk, whey and other dairy products, but hope of licking a bowl of fresh whipped cream or genuine strawberry simmering in real sour cream is dashed. There is just too little demand for these high-calorie, artery-restricting, cholesterol-laden queens of dairyland. Pity. But if milk is your fancy, you know what they say: "Milk... it does the body good."



ZOHRAB MARKARIAN

A FOCUSED MAN: And speaking of sayings, the new photographic feat of acclaimed photographer Zohrab Markarian is indeed worth a thousand words. Surfacing back in Amman after a six-year hiatus in Pasadena, California where he was "getting his house in order," Zohrab has zoomed into the world of landscape photography with his latest photographic tome entitled, "Kingdom of Peace." The book and an accompanying photo exhibition were launched last night under the patronage of Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania at The National Gallery. In its 152 pages, interspersed with Islamic, Christian and Jewish proverbs, Kingdom of Peace captures through the lens of Zohrab 80 moments of peaceful scenes to last a lifetime. Zohrab says he believes in peace, and this book is his personal contribution to it. As His Majesty King Hussein's official photographer for 15 years before his venture to the U.S., Zohrab has been witness to much of the country's history in the making. His efforts today at contributing to the peace process include a joint project with Israeli photographer Roni Sofer in which the two men exchanged mediums. Sofer photographed Jordan, Zohrab photographed Israel. The resultant exhibition was dubbed "No Boundaries," and was shown in Tel Aviv. Plans include bringing it to Amman as well as other world capitals. Wednesday's introduction of Kingdom of Peace at The National Gallery was followed by a private reception hosted by Norwegian Ambassador Tove Kijewski in which were invited several ambassadors including acting head of mission Omar Khatib of Palestine Shimon Shamir of Israel, Peter Hinchliff of the U.K., Bernard Bajplet of France and Juan Manuel Cervera of Spain, as well as several guests from Israel. The exhibition is already spurring invitations from several embassies — Norwegian, German, French, and Israeli — to bring the exhibition to their own countries. So while Zohrab and his family — wife Lisa, daughter Melissa (16) and 10 year-old twins Zoya and Kevin — have settled back into a less demanding life here in Jordan, the popularity of the photographer's work may well take him to new heights.

For those staying home for the holidays and those off to places familiar or otherwise, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Useless information

By Jean-Claude Elias

"And that man comes on the radio, and he's telling me more and more, about some useless information supposed to fire my imagination, I can't get no satisfaction..." (The Rolling Stones, Satisfaction, 1965).

Now that an enormous, gigantic amount of information, or data to speak in computer jargon, is at our fingertips what do we with it? CD-ROMS (computer laser discs) containing an average of 650 million characters each are commonly found on most PCs nowadays.

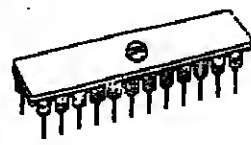
It is not unusual for teenagers to have several encyclopedias on CD-ROM: Whether multimedia encyclopedias, the Guinness Book of Records, Microsoft Encarta, Microsoft Cinemania, the Britannica, or others, what used to cost thousands of dinars and occupy several shelves can now be acquired for relatively little money and be stored in a small drawer. Typically, a person who follows the current PC trend would have at least 10 GB (gigabytes or billion characters) of information on-line, that is immediately, easily and quickly available on the computer's screen.

The above is nothing compared to what the information superhighway can provide. The Internet and other computer international networks, accessible simply by connecting a modem-fitted PC to the telephone line, offer an overwhelming amount of data, difficult to even estimate — a link to the world and all its data banks.

Last week Microsoft (understand Bill Gates) agreed with the American NBC entertainment giant to join forces and dispense continuous, interactive, on-line news through computer networks. One can sit before a PC's screen and decide what news to watch, zoom on certain events, store them, compare them and so forth, 24 hours a day. One's imagination can hardly catch up with the possibilities that are offered.

Sadly this is not making our life any better. On the contrary, it is sometimes adding to the daily stress of modern life. To be "in" one has to know many things that are otherwise totally useless. The global village is becoming a

chip talk



global hell. The educational system is often criticised for filling the students head instead of shaping it, for pouring dummy information in it instead of improving its reasoning capability. Educators have come to realise that what matters is the way information is used and that priority should be given to systems that enhance the faculty we have to analyse, synthesise and understand, instead of just absorb like robots. The world of computers, CD-ROMs and computer networks is going against this trend. It is actually diminishing people's intelligence in a certain way.

A simple example, some drawing programmes are being distributed on CD-ROM with a collection of clipart, a set of ready-made illustrations one can re-use in any kind of work.

The problem is that there are thousands of them on one single disk, making the choice extremely long if not difficult. Also in most clipart collections, the percentage of quality drawings is less than 25 per cent of the total — again, quality versus quantity.

In the future, when our children are connected to global computer networks, when they use even bigger CD-ROMs, someone would better come up with a piece of software that filters, analyses and selects information for them. They may otherwise drown in a sea of useless data and Mr. Gates' dream may turn into a nightmare for them.

JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 21, 1995

- 1:00 Iris - The Happy Professor
- 1:10 Fireman Sam
- 1:25 Hurricanes
- 1:50 My Secret Identity
- 2:10 NBA
- 3:00 The New Leave It To Beaver
- 3:30 The White Plague
- 4:30 Gillette World Sport Special
- 5:00 French Programme
- Sophie Et Virginie
- 5:30 Varieties
- Le Monde Est A Vous
- 7:00 Le Journal
- Magazine
- Archimede
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Carol And Company
- 8:00 The Album Show
- 8:50 The New Avengers
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Movie — The Man Upstairs
- Starring: Katharine Hepburn & Ryan O'Neal
- 12:00 The Fifth Missile

Friday, Dec. 22, 1995

- 1:00 The Little Mermaids
- 1:30 Beethoven
- 1:45 Lift-Off
- 2:00 Wonder Why
- 2:25 Super Carrier
- 3:15 Goldrush In Alaska
- 4:05 Movies, Games And Videos
- 5:00 French Programme
- Sophie Et Virginie
- 5:30 Telefilm
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Sports Et Musique
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Short Story Cinema
- 8:00 Natural Wonders Of Europe
- 8:45 America's Funniest People
- 9:10 Wolf
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Second Chances (Drama) Part 4
- Feature — Kiss Of A Killer
- Starring: Annette O'Toole & Maric Saint
- 11:30

Saturday, Dec. 23, 1995

- 2:00 Back To The Future
- 2:30 Harry And The Hendersons
- 3:00 Blue Heelers
- 3:45 Only In Hollywood
- 4:05 The Adventures Of The Black Stallion
- 4:35 Sky Trackers
- 5:00 French Programme
- Magazine/Documentary
- 5:30 Magazine
- Omnisciences
- 6:00 Drama
- Cest Mon Histoire
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Faut Pas Rever
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Major Dad
- 8:00 The Stamp Of Greatness
- 8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
- 9:10 Star Trek — The Next Generation
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature: "The Town Bully"
- Starring: Bruce Boxleitner & Pat Hingle
- 11:50 Behaving Badly (Part I)
- 12:40 A Special Christmas Music Programme

Sunday, Dec. 24, 1995

- 2:00 Shelley Duvall's Bedtime Stories
- "A Christmas Witch"
- 2:30 Feature — "The Dream Team"
- Michael Keaton & Christopher Lloyd
- 4:00 The Adventures Of The Black Stallion
- 4:30 Sky Trackers
- 5:00 French Programme
- Magazine/Documentary

- 5:30 Serie
- Fruits Et Legumes
- 6:00 Varieties
- L'Integrale
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Sports Et Musique
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Boogies Diner
- 8:00 Cinema, Cinema
- 8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
- 9:10 The American Chart Show
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature — "A Different Affair"
- Starring: Anne Archer & Tony Roberts
- 12:00 Christmas Mass From Bethlehem & The Vatican
- Live

Monday, Dec. 25, 1995

- 2:05 Cartoon Movie — A Boy Named Charlie Brown
- 3:30 Family Christmas Movie — Ernest Saves Christmas
- 5:00 French Programme
- Magazine/Documentary
- 5:30 Serie
- Des Heros Ordinaires
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Nimbus
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Home Improvement
- 8:00 Invention
- 8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
- 9:10 Star Trek — The Next Generation
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature — Christmas In Connecticut
- Starring: Dyan Cannon & Kris Kristofferson
- 11:50 Cinderella (3-Act Ballet)

Tuesday, Dec. 26, 1995

- 2:00 Captain Planet
- 2:30 Earth Star Voyager
- 3:15 Spirit Of Adventure
- 4:00 The Adventures Of The Black Stallion
- 4:30 Sky Trackers
- 5:00 French Programme
- Magazine
- C'Est Pas Sorcier
- 5:30 Serie
- Fruits Et Legumes
- 6:00 Documentary
- Comment Prevoir Les Catastrophes
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Ushuaia
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 You Bet Your Life
- 8:00 The Secret Of The Treasure Islands
- 8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
- 9:10 99-1 (Police Drama) Ep. I
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 I'll Take Manhattan Ep. III
- 11:15 Feature: Just Before Dawn
- Starring: Chris Lemmon & Gregg Henry

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 1995

- 2:00 Inspector Gadget
- 2:30 Ghost Writer
- 3:00 Billy Nye The Science Guy
- 3:30 Amazing Stories
- 4:00 The Adventures Of The Black Stallion
- 4:30 Sky Trackers
- 5:00 Jeux
- Trophee Campus
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 Magazine
- Sports Et Musique
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Anything For A Laugh
- 8:00 The Nature Of Things
- 8:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
- 9:10 Star Trek — The Next Generation
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Prism
- 10:45 Law And Order
- 11:30 The Nutcracker — A Fantasy On Ice

Have I got news for you... er, maybe!

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

We all like to think that we follow the news pretty closely, but do we really? How aware are we of the latest developments in world and local events? For instance, how well would we do when faced with a single test on this week's news?

Well, let us find out! What follows is a series of headlines and news stories all taken from the past few days. All that you have to do is decide which ones are true and which ones are made up. It is as easy as that.

Here we go then!

1. A recent European Commission decision was described as "incomprehensible and very damaging to relations with all our partners in the eastern Mediterranean..." Where does it leave the rhetoric of Barcelona? Was this in response to a) The Commission's silence over parliament's decision to turn down a request to have maternity leave extended from three to six months, b) The Commission's silence in the row over gender issues in the eastern Mediterranean, c) The Commission's silence in the row over the classification of deprived and needy families, d) None of the above.

2. The latest Michael Jackson single, the melancholic Earth Song has been adopted by a new political party in Jordan as its theme song. The party, fittingly called the Green Party, has apparently already applied for official recognition with the concerned authorities. Its application was accompanied by a manifesto on the preservation of the environment that bore the signatures of over three million Jordanians expressing deep concern and worry for the state of our natural habitat.

3. Jordanian newspapers have devised a new campaign to defuse the scathing criticism over a) The inability of the authorities concerned to put an end to price hikes, b) The inability of the authorities concerned to adopt appropriate measures to fight poverty, c) The inability of the authorities concerned to secure an immediate rise in the salaries of public employees.

4. One of the most scathing reviews of the Beatles' latest single Free As A Bird was written by none other than the late John Lennon himself. Amooog his papers was found a blatant dismissal of the song with an added note for a wish that the song be scrapped before any surviving Beatles member gets his hands on it.

5. Which educational feast this week was described as "perhaps the greatest act of endurance in modern education?" Was it a) The Ministry of Education's handling of this scholastic year's Tawjihi examinations, b) The "one

session a year" Tawjihi examination, c) The explanation of the arrangements for the new Tawjihi examination arrangements.

6. The current wave of strikes in France is, it turns out, in protest against the Tablidan government's nuclear-testing programme, which involved a random series of explosions in the centre of Paris.

7. A poll taken among low-income groups in Jordan recently revealed that 10 per cent of them believed that the plots of land on offer at market prices by the HUDD (Housing and Urban Development Department) were in Abdoun, 25 per cent believed they were in Sweifiah, and 65 per cent believed that the plots were in Aqaba.

8. A leading Chinese dissident was remanded in custody for 15 days while the state security court in China, which is normally presided over by military judges, investigated allegations of sedition and slander against the dissident. A Chinese official had said that civilian judges would preside over the court's sessions.

9. According to Traffic Department statistics, only 3 people were killed and about 25 injured in the 3 road accidents that the Kingdom had witnessed between the months of January and September of this year. This was a dramatic drop on last year's figures when road accidents claimed the lives of 433 people and left 12,516 people injured.

10. An East Asian ex-president has been on a hunger strike since Dec. 3 and has been drinking nothing but barley tea. It has emerged that he started the strike when it became apparent that his cellular phone company had lost the licence to operate a new mobile phones network in a small eastern Mediterranean country.

11. In a recently leaked memorandum, it emerged that we, the people, have the power to be able to stop the excesses in our weekly tabloids. And apparently, even though our esteemed mainstream press need not worry about the pending new restrictions, all journalists have been issued with a warning that they must carry their muzzles with them at all times.

12. Royal Jordanian Airlines celebrated this week its thirty second birthday. And according to official statistics in a leading esteemed mainstream local newspaper, the company which started out in 1963 with just one plane is now the proud owner of 48 planes which serve 47 stations spread over four continents.

ANSWERS: Even though some of these news stories were in fact true, all were officially denied.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

BY MOHAMMAD A. SHUQAIR

FACTS & FIGURES

— MORE than one out of five people in the United States play some kind of musical instrument.

— A FEMALE mackerel lays about 500,000 eggs at a time.

— STEAM is water that is expanded sixteen hundred times its original volume.

— THERE are a total of 485 active volcanoes in the world.

— BETWEEN seven and ten tonnes of sugarcane are required to produce a tonne of sugar at the mill.

— THERE are only 12 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet.

— A CUBIC yard of air weighs more than two pounds.

SALWA: "I'm reading 'The Ideal Way of Bringing up a Child'."

MOTHER: "But you're still a little girl and have no children. Why do you read it?"

SALWA: "To know whether you've followed the right way in bringing me up!"

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What is a tontine?
2. How did Louisiana become part of the USA, and after whom was it named?
3. During what centuries did the Ming dynasty rule in China?
4. Which of the following plants are wild flowers and which are cultivated: campanula, campanula, heliobore, celandine?
5. What is (a) a leper's squint (b) a priest's hole (c) a clerestory?
6. Which of Beethoven's symphonies contains a funeral march?

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** He is supposed to finish his work today.
Al-mafrood an yonhi amalahu al-yawm.

** I wish you lend me some money.
Laytaka taqridoni ba'dan nuqood.

** You had better stay at this hotel.
Al-afdal an tuqem fee hathal fondooq.

** If you were in my place, what would you do?
Law kouta fee makani, matha kouta ta'mal?

** I am not looking forward to getting a high salary.
Ana la atattala lil'husool ala morattab aali.

** Don't you think this room needs cleaning?
Ala tazon anna hathihil ghurfa tahtaj eha tanzeef?

** You should avoid doing these dangerous things.
Yajeb an tatabasha amal hathihil ashya' al-khateera.

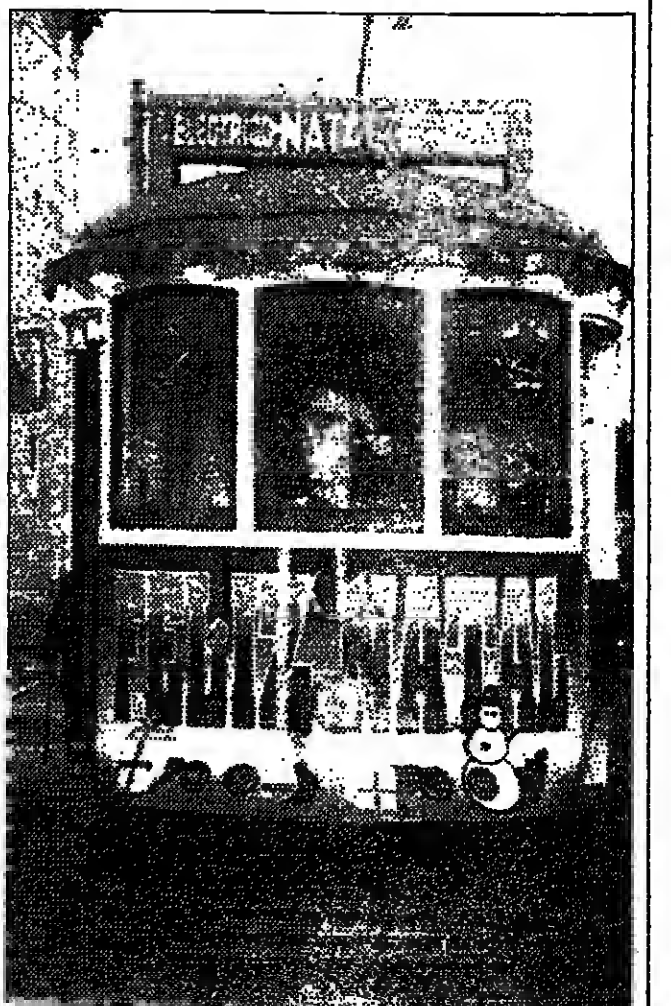
** Instead of lying in bed, you should see the doctor at once.
Badalan minar-ruqood fil-firash, yanbaghi an tazoor al-tabib fil-hal.

** Please remember me to your family.
Arjoo an taballigh salami elal osrah.

JOKES

— GREENGROCER: "Green peas! Green mallow!"
CHILD: "Hello seller of peas and mallow, have you got other colours?"

—The child saw his brother smoking a cigarette?
"Father, father, my brother's..."
(Brother looking at him despitely and indignantly)
My brother's given up smoking! Don't you know, dad?



SANTA DRIVES STREETCAR: Santa Claus drives a Lisbon streetcar in the historic neighbourhood of Belem. As part of the holiday season, Santa takes children for a ride through Lisbon and gives them Christmas presents (AFP photo)

Blanca del Rey — a dancer that delivers the message

By Ica Wabbbeh
Jordan Times Staff
Reporter

AMMAN — Under the spotlight a hand comes to life and brings to mind Tchaikovsky's swan. A fan takes on a life of its own and moves in fascinating arabesques, expressive and forming intricate patterns. A rich, golden frilled shawl assumes zoomorphic dimensions and fascinates with its snake-like movements, sinuous, voluptuous, almost erotic.

It is magic, but a magic in its own class: That of an accomplished artist, flamenco dancer Blanca del Rey, whose passion transcends all barriers and is transmitted to the audience contagiously and intoxicates them.

Feted by kings and heads of state, the artist is a woman on whom time seems incapable of leaving any mark but on which she has left her imprint for ever.

Blanca del Rey is a dancer with a soul and a philosophy. She is driven by an inner passion that makes her moves oblivious to an audience but careful to bear her own feelings that demand to be freed, given a form, expressed.

"Art is born from a necessity to free ourselves from many things, to excel as human beings. Art is born from an artist's emotion and desire to express himself," says del Rey, eloquent hands gesticulating to give more meaning to her words.

A prodigy child, Blanca had already won several competitions by the age of six. She went on performing and developing her art



Blanca del Rey

until, at 19, she married and stopped dancing for 12 years.

Convinced that her mission was to raise her children and be a housewife, she did not feel the stirring in her soul and the restlessness in her body until a deep depression was diagnosed by her doctor as the "need to dance."

"For me dancing is as natural as my body. If I miss this vital way of expressing myself, there is an imbalance, an awful fight between my mind and my spirit. I had accepted the fact that I would not dance anymore. The mind, not to suffer, denies things. But

there comes a time when your pent up emotions burst because they do not follow their natural course. This is why, after seeing me, the doctor said if I did not dance, I would die," says del Rey explaining how she returned to her first love, flamenco.

On stage, her emotion is overwhelming. Every part of her body talks. She can make one happy, sad, angry, elated. Her feet move with dizzying speed. Her hands swing with the grace of a willow tree. Her posture defies the rules of gravity and her proudly erect head dares and challenges the

world. From lusciously voluptuous to wisely sensible and fiery emotional, del Rey's dance transports the viewer into a world of passionate love, of tragic corridas, of calm feelings or tumultuous, contradictory emotions.

On stage she can be as elusive as a dream, but also real and impacting. The staccato of her steps, accompanied by the rhythmic clapping of the singers is dramatic and only enhances the forms she expresses. The guttural voice of the background vocalists is rare, somehow raw and perfectly complementary to the exotic performance of the dancer.

The show assails feelings, touches innermost chords, transposes in heights normally not known. One wonders what makes the artist move the way she does, what her motivation is.

Her technique is perfect, her body is strong, but this is not all there is to her. It is the warmth of her sentiments and the desire to impart her feelings that animate her and make her performance unforgettable.

"Art is all about sending a message. I always think of the Altamira Caves. If the primitive art was not for a message, what was it for?" asks del Rey.

Aware of this and of her public's needs, she thinks it is not difficult to understand her dance as "art has no frontiers."

"I have the luck to be always understood wherever I go. Basically because I put my heart in what I do. I use my technique to express my feelings not the other

way round," she says, while also explaining that in the world of forms, when there is emptiness, the forms remain empty, when there is warmth, they are full of feelings and expression.

"Art is not just saying I want to make art, it is not mechanical expressions," says del Rey. It is the desire to give yourself. But it is equally important "to find people who could assimilate the life that comes before the movement as it is a message you communicate with this movement."

How long will Blanca del Rey dance?

"It is important to understand the phases of life. I will always dance, but I will dedicate myself to choreography, to teaching. Perhaps I will not be at the height you saw me yesterday. I am growing as an artist, but the moment I feel I cannot develop anymore, I will have to stop. One has to be humble, make place to others. I am alert to life, balanced, and my work could continue. But we can be neither the animals in the cave nor the tamed dog. We have to be homo sapiens and this is more difficult. But this is my dance, all this process of evolving."

And evolve she has, so much so that one can easily say she has reached perfection.

"Nobody gives you anything in life. You have to develop yourself. This gives you inner peace, satisfaction. My dance cost me my life, but it was good for my evolution and progress, so it does not matter. What matters is for people to see me and appreciate me."



Blanca del Rey performs her Flamenco magic on stage

Not a difficult task after seeing her. For her vibrating presence is bound to leave a lasting impression on anyone seeing her.

Blanca del Rey and Company performed for one night only in Amman at the Prince Hassan Auditorium of the University of Jordan on Dec. 16.

Pryce dominates Carrington with a startling Strachey

By Matt Wolf
The Associated Press

LONDON — Dora Carrington may be the idle character, but the performer commanding the attention — and early awards — in the movie Carrington is Jonathan Pryce.

Pryce plays the homosexual Lytton Strachey, biographer and author of *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and Carrington's beloved if platonic companion from their meeting in 1915 at Virginia Woolf's country home to his death 17 years later at age 52.

"I'm very glad the film is not called 'Lytton,'" the soft-spoken Welshman said, "because then it's all to do with confounding expectations and surprising an audience."

The film, the closing night selection at the New York Film Festival this fall, begins its commercial release across the United States on Nov. 22.

Emma Thompson plays Carrington, the Bloomsbury artist who committed suicide at 39, shortly after Strachey's death.

The supporting cast of rising English actors includes Rufus Sewell, Sam West and Steven Waddington, with a cameo appearance by Janet McTeer as Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell.

Referring to writer-director Christopher Hampton, Pryce said: "If Christopher had an obsession, it was with Carrington — the film he wanted to make was about this character around whom these men revolved."

Appearing in glasses and a long red beard, fingers long and snowy, Pryce plays Strachey as the liveliest wit Oscar Wilde never wrote.

On his deathbed, he sniffs, "if this is dying, I don't think much of it."

The role of an actor's dreams?

"It's partly why Carrington was so obsessed with Strachey. He did draw the light," said Pryce, who won the best actor prize at the Cannes Film Festival in May for this performance, and is being talked up for an Academy Award.

"The opportunity to explore that depth of character in a film is quite rare," said Pryce, 48, who has been far better represented on stage than screen over the last 25 years.

"It's like Wilde in terms of language but as far as depth of character is concerned, the nearest equivalent is Chekhov. It's quite a literate script."

Chekhov provided two of the actor's stage triumphs on London's West End — as the writer Trigorin opposite Vanessa Redgrave in *The Seagull* (1985) and, three years later, as Astrov, the doctor, to Michael Gambon's Uncle Vanya.

Pryce's Hamlet in 1980 at the Royal Court remains one of his generation's most acclaimed, as does his Macbeth at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1986.

He won a Tony Award in his Broadway debut in 1976 in Trevor Griffiths' comedians. He got a second Tony

in 1991 in his Broadway musical debut, playing the sleazy Eurasian pimp in *Miss Saigon*.

Most recently, he spent nine months at the London Palladium in the musical *Oliver* in which he offered a surprisingly cautious and fey Fagin.

"My involvement was very odd," he said of the revival of the Lionel Bart musical, which he will not reprise if it travels to the United States. "I barely rehearsed the eight weeks we had, so all my work was done in front of an audience."

"The final five or six months I began to enjoy it. The final week, I enjoyed it a lot."

On screen, Pryce has been mostly a supporting player for hire in films as diverse as *Jumping Jack Flash*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Shopping and The Age of Innocence*. His choice of movie roles, he said, has been far less discriminating than his work on stage.

"Often, with a film, I read a script once and think, 'that would be fun to do,'" said Pryce. "Then I start filming and say, 'I should have read this twice.'"

"Films to me in the past have taken less commitment to be involved with. They are a passing thing which seemed very rarely to do with the actor unless you were in a position of power that you called the shots."

"You did it, and either people enhanced it in the editing process or ruined it. It seemed a very much more haphazard venture than the-

atre, so it takes me longer to commit to a piece of theatre than it does to a film."

Pryce made his film debut as a German-Jewish refugee in Lord Grade's all-star *Voyage Of The Damned* in 1976. Better movies since have included *Richard Eyre's* little-known *The Ploughman's Lunch* (1983), with Pryce as a cynical radio reporter, and the futuristic fantasy, *Brazil* (1985), as a beleaguered clerk alongside Robert De Niro.

On TV, he received an Emmy nomination as Henry Kravis in HBO's *Barbarians At The Gate* and is known to devotees of U.S. TV commercials as the Infiniti car spokesman for the past three years.

His next film is bound for the headlines since it pairs Pryce with Madonna in the much-discussed screen adaptation of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, *Evita*, with Pryce playing Juan Peron to Madonna's Eva. Antonio Banderas co-stars as Che.

"I'd never seen it, never listened to it," he said of the pop opera. "It pre-dated my interest in musicals."

Just before the interview, he spent the morning recording the soundtrack of the film, which will be entirely through-sung. The result is that when actual filming starts in January, Pryce may find himself lip-synching the entire shoot.

"It could be delightful," he smiled. "It means you can go out to restaurants late at night. You can get a cold."

GDR beat has Germany rocking again, ja, ja, ja

By Andrew Gray
Reuters

BERLIN — As the Beatles enjoy a fresh wave of worldwide popularity with a new album 25 years after they broke up, Communist East Germany's response to the fab four is undergoing a bizarre revival of its own.

While West Germany was bopping to the Beatles, East Berlin hanned the beat and force-fed its youth orchestral dance music, free from the English lyrics of the imperialist enemy.

"I am of the opinion, comrades, that we should bring an end to the monotony of the 'yeah, yeah, yeah,' or whatever it's called," East German leader Walter Ulbricht told Communist Party bosses in 1965, heralding the launch of party-approved tunes.

Often despised by young East Germans as a tool of the state, this curious genre is now seen in a new light by music fans, six years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

A compilation of some of the best-known instrumentalists from East Germany's state record label, Amiga, has far exceeded its expected sales and sparked a wave of media interest.

"Young people didn't like the music because they were forced to listen to it," says Marcus Heumann who compiled the album.

"They simply thought this music was being played by the official media instead of their favourite bands. They didn't stop to think about

whether the music itself might be any good."

The success of the album, *L'Amigamore*, has surprised Heumann and record company bosses, who now plan to make it the first of a series of compilations plundering the Amiga archives.

The record capitalises on two current German trends. First, orchestral easy-listening music has curiously captured the imagination of a new generation and attracted a cult following in clubs booming out the smooth sound from Cologne to Berlin.

Second, nostalgia for such pleasures as there were under communism, dubbed "ostalgie" (a play on the German word "ost" meaning "east"), has developed among eastern Germans.

The album, which covers the years 1963 to 1970, reflects the Communist state's zig-zagging cultural policy.

"Until the Berlin Wall was built, artists were always told: 'Listen, the current situation is not normal. We can't afford total cultural freedom because spies and saboteurs are coming into the country and are just waiting to get hold of criticism and exaggerate it,'" Heumann explains.

"But this argument didn't hold water any more after the wall was built. The country was closed. Artists demanded more freedom and their wish was pushed through, from around 1963 onwards."

"So, rather absurdly, the building of the wall was the

beginning of a more liberal phase in cultural policy."

During this period, Amiga released a Beatles album and East German musicians were given freedom to adopt a more Western style. East Berlin seemed to be swinging with the rest of the sixties. Amiga even published two LPs in 1965 called "Big Beat".

The benevolence was shortlived. The 11th plenum of the Communist Party's Central Committee in December, 1965, where Ulbricht made his famous "yeah, yeah, yeah" comment, signalled a backlash against "decadent" music.

Erich Honecker, minister for state security and Ulbricht's eventual successor, warned delegates: "The enemy is exploiting this type of music by exaggerating the beat rhythm to incite young people to excesses."

The plenum heralded a new cultural clampdown. Spies posing as copyright officials attended concerts to see if bands were playing the dreaded beat or singing in English.

"Songs in English were frowned upon. The idea was that people should sing in the language which the people spoke," Heumann says. "That was quite clear right from the start."

The music charts were rigorously scrutinised for anything which might be deemed undesirable.

"Presenters were bribed or it was made clear from above that certain songs simply should not be at number one any more."

Heumann says. "There were times when hits would disappear from the hit parade from one week to the next."

The music ringing out of East German radios for the rest of the 1960s, and which is now making a comeback, was a mish-mash of party-line tunes, tracks by groups trying to disguise "beat" to get it past the censor and numbers so off the wall they defy classification.

Some of the tunes are reminiscent of pre-Beatles British instrumental groups such as the Shadows or the Tornados. Others resemble the "surf sound" of the United States, revived recently by Quentin Tarantino's film *Pulp Fiction*.

Perhaps the strangest piece in the collection is "Das Jahr Ist Jung" (The Year Is Young), composed by Cambodian head of state King (then Prince) Norodom Sihanouk and played with gusto by the Leipzig Dance Music Radio Orchestra.

The revival of interest is due to more than just a tongue-in-cheek review of East German cultural history.

"We liked these tunes because they are so lovingly arranged," says Myriam Brueger, spokeswoman for L'Age D'Or, the record firm which took up Heumann's suggestion to publish *L'Amigamore*. "They just sound so nice."

Raphael's angels are widely used detail of sublime painting

By Larry Thorson
The Associated Press

DRESDEN, Germany — A flash of recognition often hits people who stop to study Raphael's sublime painting *The Sistine Madonna*.

Those two angels at the bottom — they look familiar.

Indeed, they're on greeting cards, Christmas wrapping paper, feel-good postcards, souvenirs, T-shirts,

even bed linens. Americans may be licking one of them on a U.S. postage stamp in the "love" series this year.

Though their popularity is growing in the 1990s, the images of innocence are almost 500 years old. And they have had a life of their own for more than a century as widely reproduced illustrations — sometimes with an irreverent twist, as in a postcard that shows one of them puffing marijuana.

Their passage into kitsch

is a bit maddening for Gregor J.M. Weber, curator of Italian paintings in the old masters' paintings gallery at the Zwinger, a 19th-century museum that helps draw a half-million tourists a year to Dresden, 190 kilometres south of Berlin.

Mr. Weber sees the angels as a detail on his gallery's most famous painting.

"If a reproduction goes to extremes, it can be difficult. It's like the Mona Lisa. It's

such a widely known image, and so often altered, that it's no longer seen as a portrait of a woman, and the picture is damaged," he said. "My interest is to put the angels in the context of the whole painting."

Raphael painted *The Sistine Madonna* in 1512-13 when he was working in Rome at the height of his powers. The painting is named for the martyred Pope Sixtus II of the 3rd century, not Pope Sixtus IV

of the 15th century, for whom the Vatican's Sistine Chapel is named.

Pope Julius II commissioned the painting to be the altarpiece in the Benedictine cloister of San Sisto in Piacenza in northern Italy. The painting has been in Dresden since 1754, when it was bought by August III, prince-elector of Saxony and king of Poland, for 120,000 gold marks. It was said to be the highest price paid for any painting up to

that time.

The two angels, leaning their pudgy arms on a parapet, occupy less than 10 per cent of the canvas. They are "mediators" between the viewer and the main subject of the work: Their eyes are directed heavenward to the Madonna floating in clouds with the Christ child in her arms.

On either side kneel St. Sixtus and St. Barbara, the patrons of the Piacenza cloister. Sixtus is beckoning

the Madonna and child toward the world of the viewer of the painting, and the two sacred figures are looking into the distance with serene intelligence.

Extracted from the painting to stand on their own with their reddish wings, the angels could be cupids in service of Eros. That might account for some of the poppish that Mr. Weber has in a collection of authorised and unauthorised reproductions of the angels.

"Friends send me these from around the world," he said, showing a cabinet full of angel images in his office.

On the off-colour side is a catalogue offering condoms in a packet decorated with Raphael's angels. A birth-control pamphlet from Australia has one of the angels — the especially pensive one with chin in hand — and the overline, "so you are thinking of having a baby."

Princess Sarvath, honoured internationally for pioneering education in Jordan, says Kingdom notched role for itself

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's advances in improving education and introducing innovative means to address problems in educating those with learning disabilities have been recognised internationally as evidenced by a recent award that was given to Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, who pioneered special education programmes for children with learning disabilities in the Kingdom.

The challenge now, says Princess Sarvath, is to maintain the advanced levels that Jordan has achieved and to strive continuously for more. And the Princess, with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on her side offering total support, is confident that this could be

achieved. While special education for the disabled had been the launching pad for Princess Sarvath's involvement in the education sector, "one thing led to another," and today some of the outstanding institutions established under her direct guidance include the Princess Sarvath Community College and the Amman Baccalaureate School.

For many, news that Princess Sarvath was awarded the 1995 "Woman of Peace" prize by the Rome-based Together for Peace Foundation was a surprise perhaps because the YWMA Centre for Special Education, set up under the initiative of the Princess in 1974, did not care much for limelight despite the significance and importance of its contribution to the

society. But the prize, which Princess Sarvath attributes to dedicated team work ("after all, I am as good as the team that works with me," she says), was an eye-opener to many others to not only the strides that the Centre for Special Education has made but also to the Kingdom's achievements in education in general.

"The award was not only for special education, they said it was for all sorts of education," notes Princess Sarvath. "I feel flattered by that."

A close look at the record and history of education in Jordan makes it clear that it was no accident that the Together for Peace Foundation pointedly referred to Princess Sarvath's contribu-

tion to developing the education sector in general. Jordan, which ranks among countries with a relatively high proportion of children with learning disabilities (mainly because of intermarriages), did not have any special education worth its name for such children some 30 years ago.

What Jordan had at the time was "basically a place where a few people could just put their children for a few hours," the Princess recalls. "The children were not educated, they were not taught any special skills or crafts."

Today, the Centre for Special Education, which started off with 20 students and three staff members, not only accommodates 175 students from three to 18 in its pre-school, school and pre-

vocational sections but it is also called upon to offer expertise and training in special education to other institutions in Jordan as well as for countries like Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon.

But this is not all. Quite recently, the minister of labour of Luxembourg, who visited the centre, gave one of the most resounding endorsements of the pioneering nature of the project when she said that the institution "now stood on its own internationally," and even Luxembourg, which has one of the highest per capita incomes internationally, "did not have anything to match it" in its part of the world.

The facility offers it students (after diagnosing the precise nature of individual

learning disability) a basic academic education coupled with such skills as cooking, maintaining laundry, personal hygiene and encourages them to be as self-reliant as possible. The pre-vocational unit trains them in carpentry, block-making, weaving and ceramics — crafts that help them earn a living.

The Centre for Special Education led to the setting up of the YWMA Sheltered Workshop, where the graduates from the pre-vocational unit are given a "safe training and working environment." Today, about 90 young people are working there, in addition to about 30 others in other factories in the same Sahab industrial area.

If the YWMA projects were unique, so are the Princess Sarvath Community College and the ABS, one of Jordan's better-known schools and which, the Princess points out, is the only non-profit oriented, non-governmental institutions of its kind in the Kingdom (the school is run by a board of trustees chaired by Princess Sarvath and all revenues are spent on expanding the school itself and for scholarships and other facilities for students).

Princess Sarvath recalls that the idea to set up the community college came with the convening of the first conference in Jordan in the late 70s, under an initiative of Crown Prince Hassan, on "participation of Jordanian women in work force."

The Crown Prince "felt it was a happy time when Jordan did not have an unemployment problem, and he felt that we had a resource that was not being sufficiently tapped."

"Any way, he believed women should participate as much as they can," says Princess Sarvath.

The community college, set up in 1980, offers two-year training courses for women "who finish school,

and do not wish to go to university but wish to have a professional training that would help them earn a living," explains Princess Sarvath.

Today, the college has about 500 students undergoing training in dozens of employment-oriented courses in various sectors of the economy—again perhaps the only institution of its kind in an Arab World where tradition has tended to discriminate against women.

While the institutions set up under the guidance of Princess Sarvath cannot on their own satisfy the entire needs of Jordan, they have nevertheless served as a catalyst for many others.

The Centre for Special Education, for instance, led many other institutions to realise that "young people may be handicapped but they could be productive in their own way," notes Princess Sarvath.

At the same time, the Princess warns against the "banana syndrome"—a phrase

coined by Crown Prince to describe the tendency to blindly imitate successful projects by referring to farmers who start cultivating tomatoes after seeing their neighbours making a success of the tomato business only to lead to a glut and other negative impact in the market.

While Jordan indeed needs continued expansion of facilities for special education for the learning impaired as well as innovative institutions that cater for the particular features of the society, this should not be commercialised, the Princess maintains, because commercialisation, by definition, makes it difficult for most institutions to rise to the challenges and they often end up offering sub-standard service or product that could be detrimental to the children themselves.

"I do not begrudge the right of anyone to launch commercial ventures," says the Princess. "But making money should not be done at the expense of children."



Crown Prince visits Irbid

(Continued from page 12)

rious parts, including the Irbid refugee camp, and met with administrators at Irbid Municipality.

The Prince instructed the administrators to pay more attention to planning the old markets of Irbid City and commended the municipality's decision to turn the old prison into a national museum.

After performing noon prayers at Sama Al Rousan's Suleiman Mosque, Prince Hassan met with the town's residents who presented His Royal Highness with a token gift.

Jordan backs Yemen stand

(Continued from page 1)

added. Spokesperson of the Islamic Action Front party at the Lower House of Parliament Hameed Mansour described the Eritrean attack on Hanish Al Kabir island as a Zionist conspiracy and called on the House in its session on Wednesday to condemn it.

"All evidences show that this aggression has been carried out in coordination and cooperation with the Zionist state in occupied Palestine. It is a new aggression on the Arab Nation," Mr. Mansour said.

Mr. Mansour said there were some reports that indicate an agreement between Eritrea and Israel to enable the latter to set up "a Zionist settlement in the Red Sea."

"This poses a danger to Yemen's security, its land, and water and maritime navigation. It is a danger on the Arab World," he said. "I call on the House to issue a statement condemning the Eritrean aggression and

Zionist intervention and calling for an immediate (Eritrean) withdrawal from the Yemeni island. The statement should also show support for the Yemeni people in their stand against the Zionist conspiracy."

"I also call on the government to condemn the Eritrean aggression and support the Yemeni cause," he added.

House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour said that the statement could not be issued "for lack of sufficient information on the conflict," but said that the conflict should be discussed since it was accepted in principle as an issue.

Israel ready

(Continued from page 1)

also important. Let's first try to find out what kind of peace we are talking about," he said.

In another development, state radio reported that Prime Minister Shimon Peres informed a meeting of his inner cabinet peace talks due to resume next week near Washington after a six-month suspension.

Mr. Peres told the ministers that a planned week-long break between two rounds of talks due to start Dec. 27 would be shortened by "several days ... to maintain the momentum of the talks," the radio said.

The meeting, called to prepare for next week's talks, was attended by several top ministers, including Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal and the minister in charge of the peace process, Yossi Beilin.

Syria has categorically rejected any Israeli military presence on the Golan, now home to 13,000 Jewish settlers.

Another senior Israeli official told AFP that Israel's willingness to drop the demand was the key element which led to Saturday's announcement of a resumption of Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

Saleh sets terms for talks

(Continued from page 1)

guaranteeing security and international navigation," Mr. Saleh added.

He said he contacted his Eritrean counterpart Isaias Afewerke through the United States on Sunday to secure a short-lived ceasefire.

Hanish Al Kabir, which is deserted and has no water resources, is part of an archipelago which was a former Ottoman possession whose ownership has never been established under international convention.

The islands command access to the Bab Al Mandab straits between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

"We are committed to the ceasefire to enable us to delve into peaceful means," President Saleh said.

"Our negotiations could be bilateral, through mediation, or by resorting to international law and maritime law or by finally going to the International Court of Justice," he said.

Earlier, an official dismis-

sed published reports that Yemen had ordered military mobilisation to retake the island.

"There is no urgent need to mobilise the armed forces for what we consider a passing incident and a passing emergency," a Yemeni army official told Reuters.

Mr. Saleh said: "We have documents and a lot of papers to prove that Hanish Al Kabir is a Yemeni island and despite that, we do not mind conducting a dialogue to prove our right."

Gulf Arab newspapers reported that Yemen had begun preparations to launch a counterattack to liberate the island using its small Soviet-armed navy and air force.

Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani accused Eritrea on Tuesday of refusing to negotiate and seeking to prolong the conflict.

According to Sanaa, the two countries had agreed on Dec. 7 to settle the dispute through negotiations after the Holy Month of Ramadan.

وزارة الأشغال العامة والإسكان
دائرة العطاءات الحكومية
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

Invitation for Bids Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems in Greater Irbid Area Sewerage System, Contract 4 (North-East Irbid Network) Contract No. 232/95/Central

1. The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing/Government Tenders Directorate, invites experienced contractors who have been pre-qualified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as First Grade in Water and Sewerage to submit their offers for the supply, delivery, and construction of Wastewater Collection System in the Greater Irbid Area-Sewer System, Contract 4 (North-East Irbid Network). The documents, requested in the tender documents will not be used for pre-qualification, but only as a general guide for contractors financial capabilities and work in-hand. Accordingly offers shall be submitted in one envelope.

2. The project is partially financed by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau of Germany, (KfW). The project consists of the supply, delivery and construction of sewer pipes with diameter varying from 200mm to 700mm, with a total length about 37000 m, plus house-connections of 150mm in diameter with a total length of about 4500 m.

3. Tender documents are available and may be examined and purchased from the Government Tenders Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Amman: P.O.Box 1220, Tel. (+) 962 6 606 757, Fax. (+) 962 6 606 751.

4. The non-refundable fee for each set of tender documents is JD 300.

5. The latest date set for the purchase of tender documents by eligible bidders is January 15, 1996.

6. A pre-bid conference will be held at the Water Authority's main offices in Amman at 900 hours, on January 22, 1996. A site visit is proposed thereafter.

7. Bids are due not later than 1200 hours, Jordan Local Time, on February 6, 1996, to the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.

8. Bids will be publicly opened at 1400 hours, on February 6, 1996, in office of the Government Tenders Directorate.

Eng. Naser Madadine
Chairman/Central Tenders Committee
General Directorate/Government Tenders Directorate

Kabariti

(Continued from page 1)

first. United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on Monday appealed to the two sides to settle their dispute through diplomatic negotiation and offered his offices to help.

Yemen's Parliament Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Al Abmar was reported on Wednesday to have said Yemen might be forced to put the issue to the U.N. Security Council if Eritrea did not resort to reason.

He was quoted by Bahrain's official Gulf News Agency as telling the Sawt Al Arab radio the conflict was sudden and that Yemen's presence on the island was tiny.

The Arab League has come out in firm support of its member Yemen.

Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

1993. Although the Palestinians do not expect a return to the pre-war Gulf aid level, they hope GCC members will honour their pledges to subscribe to an international aid package for the self-rule areas in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Qatar has already created a \$250-million venture to invest in those areas while UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan promised in October to finance the reconstruction of key institutions and building of houses in East Jerusalem.

Such an initiative illustrates Sheikh Zayed's support for Arab and Muslim causes," said the PNA secretary general, Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

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Enron to set up office in Israel for importing natural gas from Qatar

This article, written by Rachel Neiman, is reprinted from the Jerusalem Post

ENRON CORPORATION will establish local offices within the next month, company representatives announced Tuesday in Tel Aviv.

The company intends to import Qatar-produced liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Israel, Jordan and India.

Enron would serve as Israel's secondary gas supplier, supplementing pipeline gas to be imported from Egypt.

The decision to have more than one source of supply has been endorsed by Energy Minister Gonen Segev.

"LNG is important when having two sources of energy supply, particularly if the pipeline has supply interruptions or the amount of gas is lower than expected or construction goes slower than expected," said Enron Chairman Rebecca Mark.

Ms. Mark said she hoped Enron's contract with Israel would be completed within six months.

"LNG is natural gas which has been reduced to a liquid state by lowering its temperature to 160 degrees Celsius, occupying 1/600th its normal gaseous volume. LNG can be safely shipped long distances, stored in insulated tanks and heated when needed, re-liquefied and transported by pipeline to local users."

On Monday, Paz announced a cooperative agreement with multinational Amoco concerning non-liquefied natural gas imports from the Nile Delta.

Egyptian gas reserves meant for Israel are forecasted to last until the year 2005. An agreement with the Egyptian government is expected to be in place by the end of 1996.

Enron is the largest natural gas company in the U.S. and the world's second largest pipeline operator outside Gazprom in Russia.

The efforts at securing the deal began in January 1995, when Qatari officials confirmed a letter of intent had been signed for Enron to develop a LNG project aimed at the Israeli market.

At the October Amman economic summit, a memorandum of understanding was signed by both Ms. Mark and Mr. Segev, and was witnessed by then foreign minister Shimon Peres.

The letter says Enron will negotiate to find alternate sources of LNG should Qatar become inaccessible to Israel. As for fears of future embargoes Ms. Mark pointed out that "once a \$4 billion investment is in place, the Qataris have no incentive to cut off supply."

Qatar has "expressed very strong support for the project," Ms. Mark said. "I think the Qatari government and the Emir are very forward thinking about this and are actively pursuing this project and market."

Indeed, a recent brochure with a message from Qatari Foreign Affairs Minister Hamad Thani outlines the project clearly: "Qatar is ready to expand its gas production infrastructure and provide natural gas energy to all nations in our region, including a plan to develop a new project to supply liquefied natural gas to Jordan, to areas of the Palestinian Authority and to Israel."

The investment will take between three and four years to begin operation, with the year 2000 as the earliest target date. "Our time frame will mirror Israel's energy requirements quite nicely, depending on the supply of Egyptian gas, Ms. Mark said.

Investment in the Israeli gasification facility will be up to \$300 million. Enron, together with Middle East Energy of the group and possibly a third Jordanian partner, will jointly engage in building a gasification facility for imported LNG.

"We prefer to deliver into Eilat or alternatively into Aqaba," Ms. Mark said, adding Enron has discussed the Aqaba location with the Jordanian government.

The link between Enron's Israeli and Indian projects is preferable but not essential, Ms. Mark said. "We'd like to have the larger project, but it will be possible to export gas to Israel without an agreement with India."

Arab food deficit set to surge

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The food deficit in the Arab World is set to surge in the next few years as vast arable areas remain unexploited and consumption is growing as fast as double production, experts said Monday.

From around \$2.2 billion in 1971, the Arab farm gap, covering food products, equipment and other agricultural substances, jumped to nearly \$28 billion currently and is projected to reach \$3.15 billion in the year 2000, according to Hassan Al Alkimi, head of the political science faculty at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) University.

The cumulative value of Arab food imports has totalled around \$190 billion since 1980 while the Arab League's 22 members paid more than \$46 billion on the import of farm equipment, Mr. Alkimi said in a study on the Arab farm outlook, citing official Arab and U.N. figures.

"Arab food production is growing by between 1.5 and two per cent annually while consumption is growing by nearly five per cent. This has led to a steady widening in the Arab food gap and more reliance on foreign sources," he said.

Mr. Alkimi's figures showed the food gap, the difference between farm imports and exports, would likely accumulate to around \$375 billion in 2000.

The gap covered most farm

products and the bulk of the Arab countries are suffering from a high food import bill despite attempts to expand crops.

The cereal deficit is forecast to reach 26.1 million tonnes in 2000 from around 19 million tonnes in 1992 and 11.2 million tonnes in 1975.

Wheat shortage will rise to 19.2 million tonnes from 8.8 million tonnes in 1992 while that in sugar will grow to 3.5 million tonnes from around 2.2 million tonnes and meat to 5.5 million tonnes from 1.6 million tonnes.

Experts cited several factors for the heavy Arab reliance on imported food, mainly political differences, unrest, and failure to exploit arable areas.

Official Arab figures showed less than one third of the total regional arable land of around 198 million hectares is cultivated while the agricultural sector is still lagging behind several other sectors in the domestic economy.

According to the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund, the farming sector's contribution to the gross domestic product in the Arab League stood at around 370 billion a year, accounting for nearly 15 per cent.

Farming loans also did not exceed \$6.5 billion out of the total development loans of around \$38 billion extended by Arab funds. Most of the

remaining loans were provided to water and electricity, and construction.

Experts said the rapid increase in food consumption in the Arab World was caused mainly by the population growth of around three per cent. They cited official estimates as showing the Arab population would exceed 280 million in the year 2000 compared with around 240 million in 1993.

"I do not see a solution to the Arab food problem in such a population situation and the absence of investments in the farming sector in Sudan and other fertile Arab countries," a Gulf-based economic expert said.

"There also should be a change in the farming policies in the Arab countries, with more emphasis on incentives for farmers, less government interference in farm activities and improvement of the infrastructure," he pointed out.

Official Arab studies have shown Sudan, Lebanon, Somalia, and Iraq had the potential to feed all Arabs and turn the food deficit into a surplus. But they had failed to utilise their resources due to lack of funds and reluctance of wealthy members in the oil-rich Gulf to invest there because of wars.

Officials in the region have repeatedly warned of the widening food gap, saying reliance on imports jeopardises national security.

Daily Business

A review of news from the Arabic press

Nabulsi: Central Bank aims for \$1,000 million foreign currency reserves by 1998

JORDAN, in agreement with the International Monetary Fund, has ruled out devaluing the dinar as a tool of monetary policy which is now geared at reducing the liquidity through indirect means, Central Bank Governor Mohammad Nabulsi said in a lecture at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Dr. Nabulsi stressed that the monetary policy in Jordan had scored many achievements that surpassed those planned in the structural adjustment programme. He totally dismissed rumours of currency devaluation, noting that such talk affected the Central Bank's plan to beef up the Kingdom's foreign exchange reserves. He said that the bank counter-attacked the effects of these rumours by fixing the dinar exchange rate against the U.S. dollar.

Dr. Nabulsi revealed that foreign currency reserves stand now at about \$420 million and the amount will rise to \$465 million within a week upon receiving international loans that would support the reserves. However, the Central Bank chief said, despite building up the reserves to this level, it was still short of aspiration and of ensuring a strong support against seasonal fluctuations. Noting that the current amount was only enough to cover imports for a month and a half, the governor said the aim of the bank now is to bring up the reserves to \$1,000 million over the next three years to be able to cover imports for three months.

The governor said despite lowering foreign debt to \$5.9 billion and remedying financial and economic ills through the structural adjustment programme some problems still remain and need solutions. He mentioned rising volume of imports and high debt service payment that reaches \$450 million at present. An additional problem highlighted by Dr. Nabulsi was the flow of a portion of Jordan's foreign currency assets outside the Central Bank channel with another portion, belonging to the private sector, frozen in bank accounts without exchanging it for Jordanian dinars as a result of devaluation rumours.

Dr. Nabulsi stressed that there was no escape from continuing the process of reducing liquidity through indirect means such as interest. He indicated that the Central Bank would not resort to this weapon except in limited cases and would lower interest rates when the level of reserves reach the planned target.

Responding to questions from the audience, Dr. Nabulsi agreed that higher interest rates would raise the cost of living, but, he noted, such an increase would be for a very short period as merchants transfer higher costs on to consumers. But, with interest rates being a weapon against inflation, would dampen demand and result in a lower level of inflation. Asked about the future outlook the governor said:

"I feel totally satisfied and I have no doubts whatsoever about the economic situation. The reason is that this country grew without resources 50 years ago and looking over what has been accomplished over these years is good proof of economic strength. Jordan was living on a small grant from Britain and now we are talking about a large budget bailing all the elements of a modern state. This country is now relying on its resources and this year all the Kingdom's expenditures are to be covered from its own resources. We have unemployment, but this is a case all over the world. All said, I still believe that not all our affairs are a bowl of cherries."

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	New York Close 19/12/95	Tokyo Close 20/12/95
US Dollar	1.5420	1.5385**
Deutsche Mark	1.4430	1.4430
Swiss Franc	1.1580	1.1582
French Franc	4.9565	4.9523
Japanese Yen	102.00	102.04
European Currency Unit	1.2745	1.2738

* USD Per STD ** European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Source: 20/12/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.43	5.37	5.18	5.18
Deutsche Mark	6.25	6.25	6.12	6.06
Swiss Franc	3.81	3.82	3.50	3.43
French Franc	1.81	1.82	1.58	1.56
Japanese Yen	4.62	4.68	4.68	4.68
European Currency Unit	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25

Source: 20/12/1995

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Deutsche Mark	1.0890	1.0940
Swiss Franc	0.6111	0.6142
French Franc	0.1429	0.1436
Japanese Yen	0.0032	0.0032
Dutch Guilder	0.4377	0.4399
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Source: 20/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Baharati Dinar	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira	0.043735	0.044450
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1892
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.3070	1.3070
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8330	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma	0.0055	0.0125
Cypriot Pound	1.5150	1.5820

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

One U.S. dollar	1.3760/70	Canadian dollar	1.4372/82
	1.6106/16	Deutschemarks	1.5116/26
	29.54/58	Dutch guilders	4.9415/65
	1596.2/7.7	Swiss francs	101.78/88
	6.6210/10	Belgian francs	6.3530/80
	5.5691/79	French francs	1.4143/55
	1.4143/55	Italian lire	0.7413/18
	0.7413/18	Japanese yen	
		Swedish crowns	
		Norwegian crowns	
		Danish crowns	
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Sampras leads off the walking wounded

PARIS (AFP) — The year belonged undoubtedly to Pete Sampras — but once again the stress and strain of the ATP's gruelling 37-event season took its toll.

As the final curtain fell on 1995, Sampras (knee), arch-rival Andre Agassi (chest muscle) and Michael Stich (ankle) were all out of action and receiving treatment.

The grinding week-in, week-out schedule spared few.

Boris Becker's superb late season charge at one stage appeared to be in jeopardy when he broke down with a recurring back problem during Germany's shock Davis Cup semi-final loss to Russia.

Sergi Bruguera's bid for a third consecutive French Open title fell two matches short after a two month lay-off with a knee injury.

And South African Wayne Ferreira, who played 29 tournaments — more than any of the other top players — introduced a novel way of winning tournaments. He triumphed at Ostrava and Lyon in consecutive weeks while playing with a pulled stomach muscle.

For Magnus Larsson 1995 was best forgotten. A season rich in promise after a finalist's berth at Doha and Barcelona ended abruptly just after the French Open when the Swedish player broke his ankle in two places in an exhibition match. He had to wait until November to return to the tour.

Despite the increasingly obvious shortcomings of the ATP calendar and its complicated ranking system, efforts to introduce change did not always go down well.

The International Tennis Federation's (ITF) already prickly relationship with the ATP was further enflamed when it was reported to be planning to introduce a new 'super circuit' for men and women.

As the news leaked out, ITF President Brian Tobin, clearly unhappy that so few ranking points were being allocated to Grand Slam events and frustrated at the difficulties of agreeing dates with the ATP for Davis Cup matches, outlined a proposal that a new tour comprise the Grand Slam Cup, the four Grand Slam events, and ten tournaments each offering more than two million dollars in prizemoney.

Rupert Murdoch's vast media empire was rumoured to be ready to sponsor the new tour but the ATP counter-attacked immediately and poured scorn on the idea. Within a few days the ITF were back-peddalling and



Pete Sampras (left) of the U.S. pours water over Davis Cup teammate Andre Agassi after the U.S. won the semifinal earlier this year. Agassi did not play because of a chest injury (AFP photo)

they shelved the proposal because of "negative and premature debate."

Pete Sampras ended the year which began with public tears at the Australia's Open over the plight of his coach Tim Gullikson who is seriously ill with a brain tumour, in breathtaking style.

Winner at both Wimbledon and the United States Open, the Florida-based Sampras recaptured his world number-one status from early season pacesetter Agassi in November and then contributed all three winning points as the United States won the Davis Cup for the 31st time — beating Russia 3-2 on a specially-prepared clay court in Moscow.

It was a magnificent achievement by the impeccably-mannered 24-year-old Sampras on his least favourite surface after being thrust into the spotlight because of the continued absence of the injured Agassi.

Dramatically carried from court with severe cramp after a touch-and-go opening four-hour, five-set singles victory over experienced Andrei Chesnokov, Sampras returned 24 hours later to link up in a winning doubles alongside Todd Martin. He then saw off Russian number-one Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the first of the reverse singles.

Hopes that his rivalry with Agassi might blossom like the great former battles between the likes of Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors and Ivan Lendl, were thwarted in the late season.

Agassi's curious chest injury, sustained during the Davis Cup semi-final against Sweden in Las Vegas in

September, kept him out of action.

The continuing absence of the game's greatest showman prompted plenty of late season speculation.

Some claimed that Agassi, who had set another new trend in tennis clothes and appearance, had had his confidence so badly destroyed when he crashed to Sampras in the final of the United States Open final, he had nothing left to offer.

Others, however, expected him to bounce back and reach new heights in 1996.

Twelve months ago Agassi looked unbeatable. He won his third career Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, triumphed at San Jose and Key Biscayne, and looked to be heading for the only major title he has never captured at the French Open in Paris until losing to Kafelnikov in the quarter-finals.

In all he won seven tournaments from 16 events. Becker, who ended his partnership with American coach Nick Bollettieri after falling to Sampras in the Wimbledon final, proved that after more than a decade on the tour he is still a force to be reckoned with by producing a marvellous run of late season successes.

The three-times Wimbledon champion, now 28, triumphed at the ATP Championships in Frankfurt with a straight-sets victory over Michael Chang. He also reached the final of the Paris Indoor Open and the semi-final of the Grand Slam Cup. Becker's only complaint

was the size of today's players.

"When I started playing I was probably one of the biggest guys in the locker-room," said the 6ft 3in (1m90) German champion, adding: "But these days everybody is much bigger than me."

The six million dollar Grand Slam Cup in Munich provided temperamental Goran Ivanisevic with a much-needed success.

TENNIS REVIEW

The fast-serving 24-year-old Croat, who split with Australian coach Bob Brett and then slumped from second to tenth place in the rankings, salvaged his bitterly disappointing season by beating Todd Martin in the final. It was his only title in a year in which he crashed to shock first round defeats in three of the four major events — at the Australian, French and United States Opens.

But he completed his victory over Martin in devastating style — hitting four consecutive aces. No wonder Ivanisevic is impatient for 1996.

Austria's 'man of iron' Thomas Muster, told by doctors five years earlier he would never play tennis again, achieved his lifelong ambition by winning the French Open.

Muster, 28, who suffered serious injuries to his left leg and knee when he was run down by a drunken driver in Miami in 1989, enjoyed the best season of his career by winning 12 titles — one of them his first-ever indoor

tournament success at Esso — and producing the season's longest winning streak of 35 matches.

Part of Muster's secret of success was his refusal to accept defeat.

In a quarter-final at Barcelona, the Austrian left-bander had to save a match point before beating Carlos Costa of Spain — and then, in the thrilling final at the Monte Carlo Open, he saved two more match points before thwarting an over-impatient Becker. At Stuttgart Muster came back after saving four match points in the semi-final to see off Sergi Bruguera, and when he played Costa again in the final at Umag, he needed to hang on and save three more match points before taking the title.

Muster finally went off the boil at the end of the year, losing early at the ATP Championships and at the Grand Slam Cup — but he will once again be the player to beat when the clay surface gets underway in 1996.

The 5ft 9in (1m75) Chinese-American Michael Chang continued to demonstrate that smaller players can hold their own against the power merchants.

The 1989 French Open champion, armed with a much-improved serve and as fast as ever around the court, faced Muster in the final at Roland Garros and was opposite Becker in the final of the ATP Championships. He also won four titles and finished the season fifth in the rankings.

Former world number-one Jim Courier revived his fortunes with a solid season and climbed back into the world's 'top-ten' with four tournament wins.

But 21-year-old Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine,

the world's fourth-ranked player in May 1994, slumped down to 16th after a difficult season in which his only victory came when he successfully defended his title at Hamburg.

Stefan Edberg, who will be 30 in January, announced just before Christmas that he intended to retire as a player at the end of next year.

Despite winning the first event of 1995 in Doha and then triumphing in Hong Kong in October, swelling his overall career singles titles tally to 41, the decline of the former world number-one was clear for all to see.

He was no longer a first choice singles player for Sweden's Davis Cup team but in the 4-1 semi-final defeat inflicted by the United States in Las Vegas, Edberg lined up alongside Jonas Bjorkman in the doubles and gave the Swedes their only point.

Sweden's newest hope, 21-year-old Thomas Enqvist and returning veteran Mats Wilander were elected for the singles berths. Both lost.

Among promising newcomers, 20-year-old Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic moved up 120 places in the rankings to finish 28th after a season which included wins in Prague and Monte-video, while Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands was the youngest winner on the tour. He triumphed at Valencia at the age of 19 years and one month.

The 32-year-old Yahya Dombia of Senegal was the oldest and lowest-ranked winner of 1995. Australians Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde topped the doubles rankings but announced they would be splitting up their partnership in 1996.

1995 end-of-season rankings:

1. Pete Sampras (USA)	4842
2. Andre Agassi (USA)	4765
3. Thomas Muster (Aut)	4474
4. Boris Becker (Ger)	3325
5. Michael Chang (USA)	3211
6. Yevgeni Kafelnikov (Rus)	2560
7. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	2505
8. Jim Courier (USA)	2471
9. Wayne Ferreira (RSA)	2144
10. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	1861
11. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	1756
12. Michael Stich (Ger)	1727
13. Sergi Bruguera (Spa)	1666
14. Arnaud Boetsch (Fra)	1530
15. Marc Rosset (Swi)	1391
16. Andrei Medvedev (Ukr)	1386
17. Magnus Larsson (Swe)	1334
18. Todd Martin (USA)	1268
19. Paul Haarhuis (Ned)	1266
20. Gilbert Schaller (Aut)	1256
21. Jan Siemerink (Ned)	1226
22. Andrea Gaudenzi (Ita)	1206
23. Stefan Edberg (Swe)	1177

Italy, Germany beware the Russians

BIRMINGHAM (AP) — It's one of the biggest games in soccer. Italy vs. Germany on neutral territory at the European Championship.

What coaches Arrigo Sacchi and Berti Vogts are hoping is that both their teams will still be in the competition after they have played each other at Old Trafford June 19.

The two soccer powerhouses were put in the same group of four when the 16 qualifiers for next summer's finals were drawn Sunday.

They also have to face Russia, which qualified with a record of eight victories and two ties and was top scorer with 34 goals, and the improving Czech Republic.

"We will treat all three opponents with great respect and we must not for one minute think that this group is just made up of Italy and Germany," Sacchi said.

"It would be dangerous for us to put too much attention on the game with Germany."

The Italians first face the Russians at Liverpool's Anfield stadium and then the Czechs at the same venue five days later.

It could be the powerful Russians will gain good results against the Italians and Germans so that when last year's World Cup runner up faces the two-time European titlist at Manchester United's ground June 19, one will be

going out of the competition instead of into the quarterfinal.

"Russia is a very, very strong team and has eight players from Spartak Moscow, which is a major force in the European champions cup this year," Vogts said.

"But the game against Italy is always a classic and will be a 50-50. Italy has to be favourite in the group because it is very experienced. We are a young and comparatively inexperienced team."

The Italy-Germany game was not the only intriguing matchup to come from the draw for the group matches.

Host nation England, which will play its three group games at Wembley and stay there if it keeps winning, must face its neighbour Scotland for the first time in seven years.

The two played each other annually from 1872 until 1989 but the games were scrapped because of repeated crowd trouble.

"We will bring good-looking enthusiastic fans to Wembley," Scotland manager Craig Brown said of the June 15 game. "I'm sure our fans will be very well behaved."

Venables, whose team also faces new title favourite the Netherlands and Switzerland, reacted to the draw with disbelief.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
5 TAMBARI HRECH
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READ THEM OR WEEP

Neither vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH
A 5
K Q J 8 4
Q 6 3
A 5 3 2

WEST
A 9 8 6
Q 7 5
Q J 9 2
A J 10 8 7

EAST
A K 7 4
A 6 3 2
Q K 10 7
A Q 9 6

SOUTH
Q J 10 5 4
Q 10 9
Q A J 8 5
A K

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass
2NT Pass 3NT Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, or bridge players who offer you something to which you are not entitled. There could be more to it than meets the eye.

South had a difficult rebid. The obvious three diamonds would be a reverse, and with almost half of South's high cards in the short suit, that would be a distinct stretch. The choice lay between two spades and two no trump so, despite the

slightly off shape, two no trump was certainly the better choice in light of the good stoppers in the minors.

Declarer won the club opening lead in hand and led the ten of hearts. East correctly holding off the ace. The nine of hearts came next, declarer following with the eight from dummy. East saw that holding up one more time would tell the table's hearts and ducked again.

Declarer quickly played a spade to the ace and a spade back, and all was well. No matter what the defenders did, declarer was certain of four spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs.

East was guilty of more than a defensive error in not winning the second heart and returning the queen of clubs — that would have left declarer with only eight tricks. East insisted South's intelligence.

If all declarer needed for the contract was four heart tricks, it would have been a simple matter to overtake the nine of hearts on the board and force out the ace, since the ace of spades was still in dummy as an entry. When declarer failed to do so, East should have realized that declarer did not need the extra two heart tricks, no winning the ace and reversing to clubs should have been obvious.

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NBA RESULTS

WASHINGTON (AFP) — National Basketball Association results and standings after Tuesday's games:

Detroit	94	Toronto	82
Cleveland	100	Minnesota	95
New York	89	Miami	70
Houston	103	Phoenix	96
Chicago	114	Dallas	101
LA Lakers	109	Milwaukee	105
San Antonio	111	Portland	103
Vancouver	94	Seattle	93
Golden State	102	Charlotte	99
Washington	108	LA Clippers	104

North Korea may attend Atlanta Olympics

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea has informed former U.S. President Jimmy Carter that it may reconsider its decision not to attend the Atlanta Olympics, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said here Wednesday.

Yonhap, in a dispatch from Washington, quoted a statement from the Carter Centre in Atlanta as saying that the centre had forwarded the information to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The Carter Centre statement was also quoted as saying that should North Korea apply to take part in the games, the IOC would consider the application favourably, despite expiry of the November entry deadline.

The late application would however bar Pyongyang athletes from competing in some events involving a regional selection process, it said.

Carter, who visited North Korea early in 1994 to broker a summit between Seoul and Pyongyang, had recently written a letter urging Pyongyang to reconsider its decision not to participate, Yonhap said.

On December 8 IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch told a session of the Japanese Olympic Academy in Tokyo said he was confident North Korea would take part.

"I am quite sure North Korea will be there," Samaranch said then. "For North Korea it will be quite an important game, with all the countries of the world there."

Pyongyang boycotted the 1988 Olympics in Seoul after failing to co-host the event, then won four gold and five bronze medals in the Barcelona Olympics.

But it has stayed away from most international sporting events since the 1993 East Asian Games in Shanghai.

Troubled Tomba wins slalom and apologises

MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO (R) — Alberto Tomba scored his first World Cup victory of the season on his 29th birthday on Tuesday, then dedicated his triumph to friends and family for standing by him.

"You can imagine what this win means to me," said Tomba, formally under police investigation after a photographer, who had sold nude photographs of the Italian to a magazine, complained the Olympic hero had injured him.

"My father, mother and

sister are here," the Italian overall world cup champion said after a devastating second run helped him beat second-placed Frenchman Yves Dimier with a combined time of one minute 34.62 seconds. Dimier was more than 1.5 seconds slower.

"I dedicate this win to them and to the fan club who love me and support me," said Tomba, third after the first leg. "Even when I don't win it's all the same to them. They understand me."

"I will celebrate quietly with them tonight."

Brazil named best team of '95

ZURICH (AP) — World soccer's governing body FIFA named Brazil as "team of the year" for the second straight year Tuesday.

Brazil suffered only one defeat this year, a loss on penalties in the recent Copa America final against Uruguay.

Germany was runner-up in the rankings, with Italy third and Spain fourth.

Jamaica got the honours of being the "mover of the year," climbing 40 places up the FIFA-Coca Cola world rankings into 56th position.

Trinidad and Tobago and the Czech Republic also made big improvements in rankings this year, FIFA said.

1. Brazil	68.49 pts
2. Germany	61.77
3. Italy	61.10
4. Spain	59.12
5. Russia	58.76
6. Netherlands	57.35
7. Argentina	56.88
8. France	56.73
9. Denmark	56.43
10. Norway	55.74
11. Romania	55.10
12. Mexico	54.81
13. Sweden	54.79
14. Czech Republic	53.40
15. Colombia	53.29
16. Portugal	53.24
17. Bulgaria	53.02
18. Switzerland	52.11
19. USA	51.04
20. Ivory Coast	48.98
21. England	48.68
22. Tunisia	48.26

PARIS (AFP) — Old Father time, after years of sharpening his scythe, finally cut athletics' ageing stars down to size in 1995.

It was a year of world records and golden moments — but the sport's senior citizens hardly got a look-in as the next generation took over.

Remember the 30-something Carl Lewis, Linford Christie, Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Heike Drechsler?

All four, burdened down with massive collections of Olympic and world championship medals, were all tipped for more success at the start of the year.

Yet not one of them stepped up on winner's podium at the world event in Gothenburg in August or, indeed, in Barcelona in the indoor world championships in March, as advancing years and injuries took their toll.

Christie, who began the indoor season with an unexpected 200m world record, ended the year as a grumpy 35-year-old grandfather, insisting he would not defend his 100m Olympic title next year.

His often-repeated claim that age is not important was drowned out by the roar of applause for the new kids on the block.

Those new kids were led by the brilliant Africans, with Michael Johnson of the United States in their slipstream.

Moses Kiptanui of Kenya — a 24-year-old spring-chicken — feasted on success like a glutton. His third world steeplechase title in Sweden was not enough, apparently, to satiate his appetite.

The former army officer — who claims he is so unknown in his own country that even his neighbours do not know how he earns his living —

Old father time cuts ageing stars down to size



Kenya's Moses Tanui (left) and Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie (AFP photo)

also found room for two world records, over the steeplechase and 5,000m, before banking \$130,000 as the Grand Prix champion in Monaco.

World champions Nouredine Morceli of Algeria and Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie — who now has two Mercedes cars for his golden exploits but still no driving licence — were not far behind.

ATHLETICS REVIEW

Morceli is already an all-time great at the tender age of 25. A devout Muslim, he is also a devout history-maker, adding a third 1,500 world gold and two world records — at 1,500 and 2,000m — to his roll of honour.

His dream, he says, is to hold all the world's best times from 800 to 5,000m.

To do that, however, he

would have to deal with Gebreselassie — who lost his 10,000m world record but regained the one at 5,000m — at the top end of the bracket, while Johnson looks set to make waves at the bottom.

The Texan sprinter, who looks like comedy actor Eddie Murphy and runs just as comically, leaning backwards as if in a force-nine gale, is considering a move

up to the two-lap discipline after his unprecedented 200-400m double in Gothenburg.

In doing so, he missed Pietro Mennea's 16-year-old world record by a wafer-thin 0.07sec, while Butch Reynolds' seven-year 400m record escaped by mere 0.1sec.

There is always one man to buck a trend, however.



Mozambican Maria Mutola

In athletics, it is Sergey Bubka, who pole vaulted to his fifth world title in a row. Someone should remind him he is 32.

Africa also laid claim to the women's Grand Prix champion, in the muscled shape of Maria Mutola.

Yet the Mozambican 800m runner, a mere 22-year-old like Gebreselassie, did not get it all her own way, after a ghastly Gothenburg blunder cost her what seemed like inevitable gold when she was disqualified for running out of her lane.

Her tears, however, were lost in the biggest smile of the year as Cuba's Ana Fidelia Quirot, almost burned to death in a kitchen fire two years previously, took the title.

Sonia O'Sullivan also had plenty to smile about, becoming Ireland's first-ever female world champion by

winning the 5,000m, while France's Marie-Jose Peree ruled over 400m and Kim Batten beat Sally Gunnell's 400m hurdles world mark for gold.

Gwen Torrence, meanwhile, did not know whether to smile or cry, after she was denied a Gothenburg double by doing a Mutola in the 300m final.

She left Sweden, however, enjoying the taste of sweet revenge, overhauling Jamaican Merlene Ottey — who was handed the 300m title by default and then called Torrence a cheat — for a United States relay triumph.

Even better for Torrence, she will be running for gold in her home city of Atlanta next year when she chases the Olympic title.

There is a hitch, however. By then, she will be 31. And old Father time will be waiting.

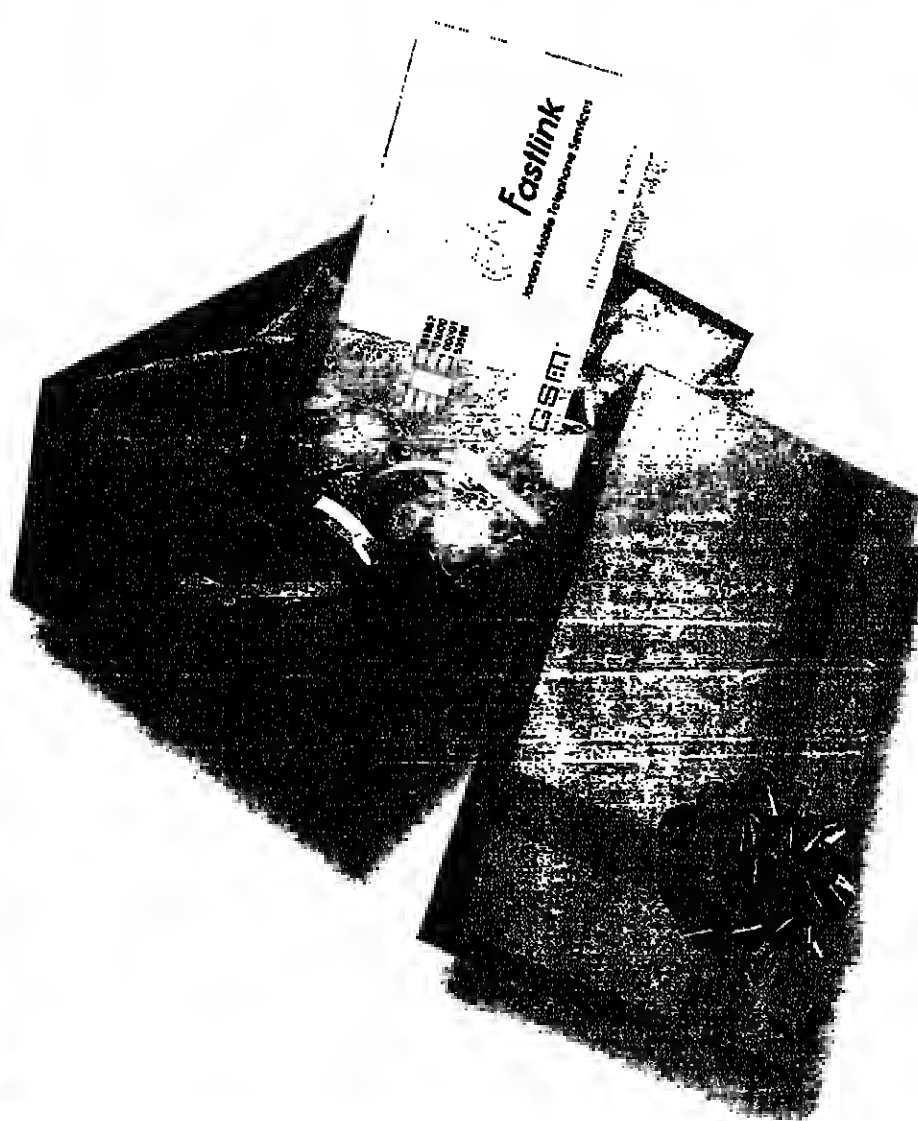
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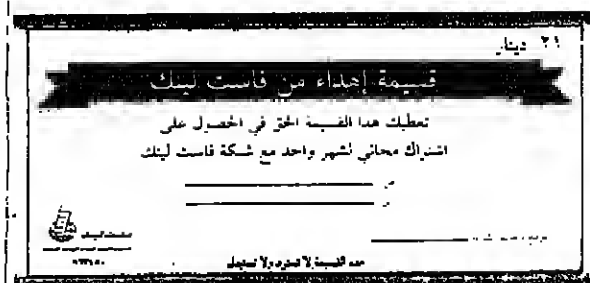
Gilano with Flamenco music Spanish music.	Saxophone & Piano duo Jazz music.	Kanako New songs hosted by Kasim Sabongy.	Gilano Band & their Gypsy music Spanish music.	Kasim Sabongy is back for his music lovers.	Stallion D.J. for members & their guests only. * Don't forget your V.I.P. Card	A.M.C. Alumni Night with Moe on the piano. Join them for the Fun.
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Sabbah assails call for boycott of Bethlehem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The top Roman Catholic clergyman in the Holy Land on Wednesday dismissed charges by foreign Christians that Yasser Arafat was turning Christmas festivities in Bethlehem into a political circus.

"These (foreign) Christians are our brothers," said Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, a Palestinian.

"But they are coming from abroad. They are bringing into the country feelings from abroad which do not correspond to... the human and spiritual needs of the land."

Patriarch Sabbah spoke a day after the International Christian Embassy (ICE), which claims to represent millions of evangelical Christians around the world, called for a boycott of the first Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem under Palestinian rule.

The group believes Israel should not return the West Bank to the Palestinians because it is part of the "Biblical land of Israel." The ICE has urged Christians to speed Christmas instead in the Jewish settlement of Efrat near Bethlehem.

Thronging of Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, are expected to converge on Bethlehem's Manger Square outside the Church of the Nativity, venerated as the site of the birth of Christ, on Christmas eve. Mr. Arafat is to preside over the festivities and deliver a speech.

On Wednesday, the town of 50,000 south of Jerusalem was festooned with Palestinian flags and posters of Mr.

Arafat. A two-storey colour drawing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader hung from the square's shopping arcade. A poster drawn across the parking lot said: "Jesus — the first Palestinian revolutionary."

Jan Willem van der Hoeven of the Netherlands, spokesman for the International Christian Embassy, said he found the display of Palestinian national symbols offensive.

It's impossible to tell whose birthday it is, but no one has the guts to say it," said Mr. Van der Hoeven.

"The whole world is allowing Arafat to use the birthplace of the Lord of our church for propaganda," he said. "Arafat is not a Christian and he has an abominable record against Christians in Lebanon. He is going to misuse Bethlehem."

However, Patriarch Sabbah, the Roman Catholic leader, said that while in the west, there was a separation between church and state, "in the east this separation does not exist, or it has to be more nuanced."

Speaking to reporters at the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem's walled Old City, he also said the boycott announced by the evangelical Christians was not in keeping with the Christmas spirit.

"This land needs reconciliation. This land needs more prayer, more profound religious spirit of Christmas and not people coming from outside telling us to boycott this and boycott that. This is not Christmas," he added.

Shoman Foundation plans a branch in Beit Hanina

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN (J.T.) — Abdul Majed Shoman, chairman of the board of directors of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, said Wednesday that the foundation will open a new branch in Beit Hanina, north of Jerusalem.

During a press conference held at the foundation's headquarters marking its 15th anniversary, Mr. Shoman told reporters that the foundation was waiting for approval to start operating "and there is a plan to open a research centre either in Jordan or Beit Hanina."

Mr. Shoman also briefed reporters on the foundation's activities locally and in other Arab countries.

"We encourage scientific exchange and the organisation of seminars and conferences to increase the scientific receptiveness of the Arab layman," he told reporters.

The foundation was established in 1980 after the assembly of the Arab Bank resolved to establish the foundation in memory of the late Abdul Hameed Shoman, in recognition of his great services to his country and his national fervour and enthusiasm.

Political party expresses solidarity with Shbeilat

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Democratic Popular Unity Party on Wednesday voiced its solidarity with opposition figure Leith Shbeilat who is detained on charges of slandering Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor.

In a statement following the end of a three-day annual conference, the party also said it would continue to oppose the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, fight what it described as Zionist hegemony and normalisation of relations with Israel.

"The party continues to reject the Oslo agreements and its annexes and consider these treaties as additional hurdles to the realisation of the just and legitimate right of the Arab Palestinian people, especially its right to return and self-determination and to establish its independent state with Jerusalem as a capital," the statement said.

The party also expressed dismay at "the poor economic conditions in the country" and heavily criticised what it said was a reversal on the democratic process in the Kingdom. It also expressed solidarity with the people and called

for lifting the international embargo imposed on it since the Gulf crisis.

The statement said the party would adopt a firm stand with labour and professional unions and the national press in "their fight for freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution."

The party, known as the Unity Party, is an offshoot of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash which opposes the peace process with Israel. Recently it started coordinating its policies for the most part with the Jordanian Democratic People's Party which has been taken to court last week on charges of having links with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) led by Nayef Hawatmeh.

This week, the party's central committee re-elected Azmi Khawaja as secretary general. Sa'ed Diab was elected first secretary and Zakaria Nahhas was elected assistant secretary. Members of the executive bureau include: Abdul Razzaq Sa'ed, Abdul Aziz Hindawi, Fakhri Imleh, Nizam Ashraf, Aliyan Aftan, and Abdullah Khalil.

Crown Prince tours Irbid Governorate

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Wednesday toured various towns and areas of Irbid Governorate and met with citizens to get familiarised with their needs and demands.

Prince Hassan, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Rashid, paid a surprise visit to the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) where he attended the weekly meeting at the university presidency.

The Crown Prince heard discussions by the university's administrative staff on the role of the university's counselling centre and the establishment of an environmental centre among other issues.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for benefiting from researches done by the university in applied sciences and said Jordanian universities should be able to graduate generations capable of dealing with modern technologies.

He called for crystallising a well-studied mechanism aiming to develop human and natural resources as well as



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Wednesday meets with Irbid Governorate residents (Petra photo)

economic indicators, and said such a mechanism requires holding a specialised workshop.

Prince Hassan also visited Al Buwaidah Dam in Al Ramtha district where he lauded cooperation among various government departments and the Armed Forces

in constructing the dam. The Crown Prince also visited Irbid City and its various

(Continued on page 7)

Government, IAF spar in Lower House over Mafrag conference

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Wednesday stressed its commitment to democracy and the rule of law and called on the opposition to adopt dialogue as means to solve differences.

Minister of Interior Salameh Hamad, responding to a comment made by a parliamentarian over the banning of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party in Mafrag on Tuesday, said he was not aware of the Mafrag incident.

"I stress here that we are keen on preserving democracy and we have confirmed in the past that meetings in hotels and wedding halls are permitted as long as the concerned government is informed," Mr. Hamad said during a Lower House of

Parliament session. "But I was not informed about (the ban) against the conference in Mafrag."

IAF Deputy Bassam Emoush, who heavily criticised the ban, described the "terms of democracy and pluralism" in Jordan as only "lyrics" that the government constantly uses for its own purposes.

"The government wants political parties to be skeletons without meat and offices without interaction with the people," Dr. Emoush said. "If the government respects the parties, it would not deal with them the way it does now."

"I don't know on what basis the governor of Mafrag took his decision to ban our activity? Was it the Constitution, the National Charter, or the Political Parties Law?" he asked. "I don't think his be-

haviour was based on an order of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shakir or Mr. Hamad because they explained to us that the meeting in a hall was very normal and a natural right."

Dr. Emoush called on the government to "widen the circle of democracy" and "understand" the role of political parties and their objectives.

"If they believe otherwise, that the political parties' objectives are in contradiction with the nation's interests, then I call for cancelling them," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh lashed out at Dr. Emoush's criticism of the government's performance and said he viewed the deputy's comments as a threat to the government.

"If they want to take 'other

measures' then he should tell us what kind of measures does he envisage," Mr. Rawabdeh said. "I wish we could resort to democratic means and let dialogue be our judge."

Dr. Emoush countered that he did not mean that he intended to "import militias" when he said the opposition would resort to "other measures" and that he only wanted to know the reason for the banning of the Mafrag meeting.

The House Wednesday continued the discussion of the House's bylaws. Heated debate ensued over the manner in which draft laws were discussed as well as changing the term the House's "secretariat" to the House's "directorate."

The House is expected to continue discussions on Sunday.

Kuwaitis call on Bahrain to revive assembly

KUWAIT (R) — About 100 Kuwaiti politicians and academics have written to Bahrain's emir asking him to restore the island state's parliament and release political prisoners, a Kuwait opposition newspaper reported on Wednesday.

"There are many demands that have not been fulfilled so far, the most important of which is the restoration of constitutional legitimacy and the people's freedom of political participation through the National Council (parliament)," Al Talea quoted the letter as saying.

They also urged the Bahraini emir to release political detainees and allow exiled opposition figures to return home.

Kuwait has the only elected assembly of the Arab Gulf states.

Al Talea said the letter had been signed by about 100 Kuwaitis including human rights activists, members of parliament, university professors and former ambassadors.

The emir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, dissolved parliament in 1975 and replaced it in 1983 by an appointed consultative council. It has no power to change draft laws.

At least 13 civilians and three policemen were killed and hundreds of people were arrested in political unrest which erupted in Bahrain in December 1994 and died down in April. Protesters called for the restoration of parliament.

Bahrain deported at least four Shi'ite clerics accused of fanning the unrest. Sheikh Isa last week pardoned an unspecified number of prisoners including an undisclosed number of Shi'ite Muslim detainees held for the anti-government unrest.

In a speech on Saturday to mark the country's national day, Sheikh Isa vowed to continue the government's firm policy of protecting national security and restoring order and said action would be taken against violators.

Kuwaiti paper calls for more powers to cabinet and parliament members

KUWAIT (R) — An opposition newspaper on Wednesday said a rare public row between top Kuwaitis over inter-Arab ties could lead to more political trouble unless the cabinet and parliament were given more say in national affairs.

Outspoken weekly Al Talea blamed the dispute on what it called poor communication among members of the ruling Sabah family and what it called the autocratic tendency of some of them to disregard the formal machinery of government.

The row became public on Monday when Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said he would quit in protest over opposition to his drive to resume ties with Arab states that sympathised with Iraq during the Gulf war.

Hours later he announced he had agreed to carry on after talks with emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah. But he made no mention of whether the foreign policy row had been resolved.

Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah has reservations over Sheikh Sabah's project and says these countries must do more to placate Kuwaiti anger.

"The crisis over Sheikh Sabah's resignation revealed the disappearance of role and content from Kuwait's decision-making constitutional institutions," said the paper.

"Communication channels between ruling figures became blocked in a manner that brought disputes to such a level."

"This course could lead the country into more mazes, if not catastrophes. This is a matter that requires of all conscientious officials... to boost their abilities to restore the correct application of the constitution."

Ties between Kuwait and several Arab states including Jordan have been badly strained of five years over their sympathy for Baghdad during its seven-month 1990-91 occupation. Kuwait down-

graded diplomatic relations and cut off official aid.

The paper said it appeared that cabinet members did not know Kuwait's official position on issues such as restoration of ties with Jordan.

The cabinet, a long time ago, lost its constitutional role in discussing and drawing up policies and making major decisions," it added.

"One of the more dangerous revelations (of the foreign affairs dispute) is that cabinet members have accepted the marginal role that has been allocated for them."

The newspaper added that Sheikh Saad had acted in such a way as to curb the role of the opposition-dominated parliament in drawing up policy and supervising its execution.

Government officials dismiss such charges. They say the restoration of the 50-seat parliament in 1992 reintroduced a large measure of popular participation to government and note that the cabinet includes several former opposition politicians.

Man who filmed Rabin killing had 'premonition,' wracked by 'guilt'

TEL AVIV (AP) — The accountant who happened to videotape Yitzhak Rabin's assassination says he had a premonition that night, and later was wracked both with grief and by a feeling that fate had chosen him to record the event.

"There was a feeling in the air that something was wrong... there was tension," said Ronni Kempler, a 37-year-old employee of the state comptroller's office, recalling the moments before the Israeli premier was shot Nov. 4.

The soft-spoken, fair-haired Israeli was standing on a shopping centre roof overlooking the parking lot where Mr. Rabin's car was waiting to ferry the prime minister away from the peace rally he had addressed.

His grainy footage, broadcast Tuesday on Israel's Channel Two TV, shows the gunman loitering unchallenged near the prime minister's car for minutes and then approaching Mr. Rabin from behind and shooting him in the back at point-blank

range. Although the gunman's face is not shown from the front, in the video he resembles Yigal Amir, the 25-year-old extremist, who surrendered at the scene and has confessed to the killing.

The Yediot Achronot newspaper and Channel 2 bought the tape for \$350,000, said Channel Two director Nachman Shai.

Some have criticised his well-publicised haggling this week over the rights to the tape, saying it amounted to crass exploitation of the tragedy.

In an interview with Channel Two on Tuesday, Mr. Kempler struggled to explain why he did not seize on the opportunity to make a possibly bigger profit in the days after the killing.

"I have a problem with publicity," he said.

Instead, he gave a copy to the official inquiry commission probing the assassination.

I simply collapsed emotionally. For two days I didn't go to work. I couldn't... I felt fate had played with me and chosen me for this."

He said he considered Mr. Rabin "a great man."

When the tape's existence became known last week, Mr. Kempler telephoned Channel Two TV journalist Rafi Reshef and invited him for a private viewing, on condition his identity remain secret. Mr. Reshef recommended he release the video.

The decision to sell came with a growing realisation that people all over Israel considered the cameraman "the biggest sucker in the country" for not exploiting his good fortune, Mr. Kempler said.

Asked by the interviewer why he focused on the future assassin so often during an eight-minute sequence of video before Mr. Rabin arrived, Mr. Kempler said: "I said to myself, suppose there is somebody here who is going to commit a murder... he looked like that kind of person."

Security foiled new bid to kill Murabak

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian security forces foiled a plan by radicals to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak last weekend and take over the government, an opposition newspaper reported Wednesday.

Al Ahali, the weekly publication of the leftist Tagammu Party, said the attack was planned by the Islamic Jihad group, which was blamed for killing President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

It said the group planned to blow up Mr. Mubarak's motorcade when it was en route Saturday to open the new parliament.

An official of the Interior Ministry confirmed the report and said that suspects arrested in the case have revealed details of the plot to interrogators. He spoke on condition his name not be used.

Describing the plan as "the most dangerous coup attempt since 1981," the paper said some 86 conspirators were to attack government buildings — including the parliament, cabinet offices and the radio and TV building — if the attempt on Mr. Mubarak's life succeeded.

The report, quoting unnamed security sources, said the assailants planned to use two cars loaded with up to 250 kilograms of explosives to hit Mr. Mubarak's car on a downtown street.

The paper said Egyptian security forces got wind of the plot from an informer who infiltrated the group. His intelligence led to the arrest of 56 suspected extremists, including five Sudanese and an Egyptian who holds British citizenship.

The arrests were announced by the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for internal security, on Dec. 13. The ministry's announcement said the suspects were planning suicide attacks against government installations but made no mention of a specific threat against Mr. Mubarak.

The newspaper said the plan was the work of Mustafa Hamza, a wanted Egyptian extremist believed to be living in Sudan.

Mr. Hamza has been implicated in the June 26, 1995, attack on a motorcade carrying Mr. Mubarak as he arrived for an African summit in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

Mr. Mubarak was not wounded in the Ethiopian incident, which was claimed by the Gamaa Al Islamiya, or Islamic Group. The Islamic Group has been blamed for much of the violence in a three-year campaign by radicals to try to overthrow Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamic rule.

A number of extremists are still being sought in connection with the Addis Ababa attack, including Mr. Hamza. Ethiopia and Egypt have accused Sudan of complicity and criticised it for failing to turn over suspects in the case.

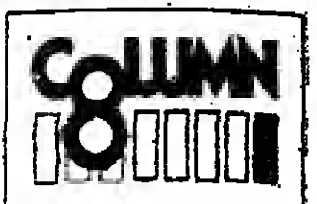
Two earlier assassination plots against Mr. Mubarak have been exposed. Testimony in the World Trade Centre bombing trial in New York earlier this year indicated extremists planned to try to attack the president during a trip to the United States in 1993. He never made the trip.

In 1994, two soldiers and a civilian were executed for a failed plot to kill Mr. Mubarak during a 1993 visit to an Egyptian border town.

Al Ahali newspaper said that security officials believe that Osama Ben Laden, a Saudi Arabian millionaire living in Sudan, put up the money for the latest plot and estimated the total at \$250,000.

The paper said the attack team was trained in Sudan and England, but gave no details.

The newspaper is published by the Tagammu Party, which won five seats in the recent parliament elections. Although an opposition party, it is close to the government and very opposed to Muslim fundamentalist activity.



Reeve gets acting, directing offers

LOS ANGELES (R) — Paralyzed actor Christopher Reeve has received several acting and directing offers and will start to consider scripts next year, according to an interview published Wednesday. Reeve, best known for playing Superman in several films, shattered two neck vertebrae when he was thrown from a horse on May 27. He was released from a New Jersey rehabilitation centre last week and is undergoing therapy at his New York state home. He needs a ventilator to breathe. In an interview published in the Wednesday edition of daily Variety, Reeve said one of the offers included voice-over work for a Warner Brothers feature. The Quest. "There'll be a lot of nice years ahead," the Hollywood trade quoted him as saying. "I'll learn to operate in a new mode. The only limits you have are those you put on yourself."

"I'm now attached to a ventilator but my breathing is getting stronger," he continued. "It may take a while but I'll get off — I'm not chained to this machine." Reeve was scheduled to direct Tell Me True in October, and said the job was still his for the taking. The filmmaking team Jim Ivory and Ismail Merchant had also offered him a directing assignment. He communicates with the aid of a computer-translator, programmed with 50,000 of his words, the report said. Reeve said his health insurance will run out in 18 months, and he is organising a fund-raiser for himself and the American Paralysis Association, which is tentatively scheduled for March 22 at New York's Radio City Music Hall.

The report, quoting unnamed security sources, said the assailants planned to use two cars loaded with up to 250 kilograms of explosives to hit Mr. Mubarak's car on a downtown street.

The paper said Egyptian security forces got wind of the plot from an informer who infiltrated the group. His intelligence led to the arrest of 56 suspected extremists, including five Sudanese and an Egyptian who holds British citizenship.

The arrests were announced by the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for internal security, on Dec. 13. The ministry's announcement said the suspects were planning suicide attacks against government installations but made no mention of a specific threat against Mr. Mubarak.

Radio Canada International to close

MONTREAL (AFP) — Radio Canada International, celebrating its 50th birthday this year, will shut down from March 31, officials said. The government and the state broadcaster Radio Canada, which share equally the funding of the international service, have indicated they will no longer pay for the station which broadcasts in eight languages. The station, running a 16.5 million Canadian dollar (\$12 million) annual budget, will close with the loss of 130 jobs, some of which will be absorbed by Radio Canada, itself in financial difficulties.

Cage criminals in zoo — S. African official

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Criminals should be caged in a zoo to enable people to humiliate them, a South African newspaper Wednesday quoted one of the country's top politicians as saying. "We must put them (criminals) in a zoo so people can go and scorn at them," the Star quoted Mphumalanga Premier Matthews Phosa as saying in a speech near the town of Lydenburg. "The time for talking is over. Now is the time for action within an integrated crime-fighting strategy. We must publicly humiliate criminals before rehabilitating them," said Mr. Phosa. The paper quoted him as saying South Africa's soaring crime rate inhibited foreign investment and stunted the confidence of local entrepreneurs. A serious crime is committed every 17 seconds in South Africa which is considered by human rights groups as the most dangerous country in the world outside a war zone.